

**Gertraude Mikl-Horke, Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration**

***The New Dichotomy: Actors and Subjects – Social and Political  
Inequality in Economic Change\****

**Word count: approx. 9.500 words**

**\* Gertraude Mikl-Horke, Institute of Sociology and Empirical Social Research,  
Department of Social Sciences, Vienna University of Economics and Business  
Administration, Augasse 2-6, A-1090 Vienna**

**Abstract**

Sociological explanations of inequality come under pressure from the economic changes of the last decades resulting in increasing differentials of income and wealth. Society seems to develop a new bipolar character of rich and poor, excluded and included, capitalist class and underclass caused by the redefinition of economic and political aims and the reorganization of the economy due to globalization, neo-liberalism and the new definition of knowledge. The specific character of the political-economic transformation and the culture of continuous change have contributed to feelings of insecurity which might turn into a new dichotomy between those who “make do” and those who are subjected to the changes. Elite selection, career and success depend in large measure on the individuals’ embracing the new demands and risks and showing the right values and attitudes towards change. In this sense the economic transformation works in the direction of a division between “actors” and “subjects” which has consequences for political inequality and the future of democracy.

**Introduction: Sociology and economic inequality**

Inequality has become a topic of great interest today and has been taken up by several official reports, in a great number of international conferences, in special issues of journals and by many studies in economics and the social sciences. The concern was triggered by the poverty in a global perspective and the rising inequality in the rich countries.

Inequality has been a central concern of sociology from its inception, but there were differences in the aims between those trying to find methods to explain the structure of the new society emerging in the course of industrialization and those combining this with the goal to build a social order that would be of greater justice than the previously existing one.

“Social inequality” as it came to be understood in sociology is a concept related to the structural constitution of society, theoretically conceived in terms of social classes, explained by functional criteria and/or by studying the subjective evaluations of the status of occupation, education and income (Ossowski 1962). In some theoretical paradigms the concept of inequality has been altogether supplanted by that of “social differentiation” (Luhmann 1985; Schwinn 2004). In the interpretation of “industrial society” findings pointed to a large, mostly homogeneous “inner society” with only a small “underclass” of the chronically unemployable and socially rejected (Kerr 1969). Most empirical surveys of social status in the developed countries showed the tendency towards a “middle-class society”. Prosperity, social consensus and the welfare state seemed to make dichotomous conceptions of social structure and the problem of inequality obsolete. Where it survived it shifted to culture issues, even when pointing out the persistence of class dispositions in these fields. The main emphasis was, however, on the behavioral plurality of life-styles in the “consumer society” or the deconstruction of structure in postmodern society (Pakulski and Waters 1996). As to social problems attention was called to “categorical inequalities” (Tilly 1998) of gender or ethnicity, or more recently, citizenship.

Sociologists did not deal with economic differentials as such; their analysis was left to the economists, even were it came to showing the institutional aspects of income disparities and income development (Blau and Kahn 2002; Freeman and Katz 1995). Myles (2003) attributed this reticence regarding economic inequality to the “positional” view of society, criticized already by Parkin (1971), that resulted in the reduction of earnings and wealth to “the structure of empty places”.

Today, as the rising income and wealth inequality has attracted widespread attention, also sociologists join in the empirical studies of social inequality focusing mainly on the subjective perceptions and evaluations of economic differentials and on “social inequalities” in many fields. But the present economic inequality is representative of the profound societal

transformation of the last decades and should attract theoretical reflection, too. Even in the expanding field of economic sociology, however, economic inequality is still not a central concern.

Attention to the importance of social aspects for the economy should be complemented by acknowledging the economic basis of society. Economic needs and interests shape social relations, economic “knowledge” forms values and beliefs, behavior and institutions, and economic decisions and actions have social and cultural consequences. “The economy” is more than growth rates, monetary differentials and quantitative efficiency indicators, it has to do with the organization and significance of work and employment, the meaning of consumption and of commodities, the aims of capital investment, the priorities of public spending and implies social values and norms as well as influencing them. Therefore, the earnings or wealth disparities are only the quantitative expression of social, cultural and political aspects of the society.

After looking briefly at the objective and subjective contours of inequality in the developed countries, the consequences of the economic and political transformation of the last decades for inequality and for its social and political implications are discussed. It will be argued that there is a new dichotomous inequality appearing that is typical for this epoch of societal transformation and which is shaped by new forms of insecurity, the polarization of economic opportunities and economic deprivation as well as the differences in the attitudes towards change.

### **Economic inequality**

“Economic inequality” refers in the first place to differentials of earnings, income or wealth. Market theorists see earnings differentials based on the demand for certain occupations and qualifications; they may be explained by meritocratic conceptions, but also with reference to institutional and political aspects like the persistence of traditional differences between occupations, the bargaining power of unions, redistributive and welfare effects on incomes and so on (Freeman and Katz 1995; Kelley and Evans 1993).

Regarding the long-term changes in the differentials of income and wealth we can assume a decrease since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; but recently most studies show an upward trend again (Cornia et al. 2004; Goesling 2001; Morris and Western 1999). The rise in income dispersal was especially remarkable in the United States during the period of the 80’s and 90’s, but since then the tendency has spread also to European countries, even to those notable for their welfare states as the Scandinavian countries (Svallfors 2005). The data show especially an increasing polarization between those at the bottom of the income pyramid and

the top earners, whereas the middle strata are shrinking (Atkinson 2007; Atkinson and Brandolini 2006; Glatzer 2002).

Studies point to the reappearance of poverty in the old developed countries (Nolan 2007), although findings differ in degree between them, showing a particularly high increase for the United States, where the sharpening of inequality has been attributed to shifts from relatively well-paid employment in manufacturing to lower-paid jobs in services, the deteriorating employment situation for poorer households, increases in non-wage income for rich people and the widening disparities in compensation within large firms (Tilly 1998: 231). What causes concern in most countries is that especially the younger people fared worse in terms of income distribution than the older individuals or households. Gender equality has made some progress, but still women lag behind; however with regard to households, the increasing employment of women counteracts the rises in income differentials. There seems also to be a great persistence of intergenerational reproduction of inequality, which has not been effectively reduced by the policies to raise equality of opportunity by promoting education (Shavit and Blossfeld 1993; Esping-Anderson 2005).

The development of wealth differentials has been more spectacular than that of earnings or income; wealth concentration was twice as high as income concentration for most countries (Hauser and Becker 2002). The Global Wealth Report of the Boston Consulting Group for 2007 shows that the 0,7% of the most wealthy households hold over one third of the world's wealth; almost half of them are located in North America, about a quarter in Europe. Between 2001 and 2006 the wealth of the 16,5% of households with at least \$ 100.000 to invest has risen by 64% (Aerni et al. 2007). Data on wealth distribution are published also by Merrill Lynch and Capgemini's World Wealth Report (2007) and by the United Nations' UNU-WIDER (Davies et al. 2008), and all of them show remarkable increases of wealth at the top. The rise has been particularly noticeable in the United States, but differences are on the increase also in other countries. Especially the very rich have gained; there was a shift of wealth from the rich to the very rich, especially in the United States (Esping-Andersen 2005). Quantitative data on income and wealth are not rendering states of well-being regarding vital inequality of life, health and physical welfare, existential inequality relating to economic, social, moral and political differences of living conditions, and resource inequality which refers to the differences in the endowment with natural resources, capital, human resources (Therborn 2001: 452/453). These issues point to *inequalities* of differences in conditions and chances of life and in the life courses of people (Berger and Hradil 1990), mostly referred to as "social inequality", a multidimensional phenomenon related to "economic" differences, but

not entirely determined by them (Lemel and Noll 2002; Neckerman 2004; Svallfors 2005; Savaglio 2006; Therborn 2006). Economic and social inequality are closely related, so that we may speak of “socio-economic inequality” (Glatzer 2002). This is evident regarding the institutional factors of the social systems (Bauman et al. 2006; Giddens and Diamond 2005) and the subjective perceptions and attitudes towards inequality.

### **Fair differences or unjust inequality?**

There is a difference between the objective findings of earnings, income or wealth differentials and the conclusion that they constitute “inequality” in the sense of “differences that we consider unjust” (Therborn 2006: 4) because they violate a preconceived standard or rule of equality and equity, the basis of the “moral economy” (Svallfors 2006). Inequality as injustice or unfairness constitutes a social problem which causes concern especially in times of economic and social transformation. Therefore, studies of subjective perceptions and attitudes with regard to inequality abound in recent years. They make use of subjective data provided by the European Social Survey (ESS) and the International Social Survey Program (ISSP).

Many comparative studies highlight the effects of institutions on the acceptance of inequality (Kelley and Evans 1993; Midlarski 1997; Ng and Wang 2001; Svallfors 2006; Kunovich and Slomczynski 2007; Kenworthy and McCall 2008) or highlight the specific aspects of some countries (Hauser and Becker 2002; Nollmann and Strasser 2002; Diamond and Giddens 2005; Kaun 2008). Interest has centered on comparing European countries with the United States (Osberg and Smeeding 2006) because of the differences in social security institutions, but there is also special attention given to the subjective evaluation of inequality changes in the former transition societies (Nee and Liedka 1997; Gijsberts 2002; Kelley and Zagorski 2004), where the historical experience of the transition from socialism to market system had a profound influence on the attitudes towards inequality. Those favoring the market system tend to accept more inequality than those who are critical of it. In general, however, acceptance of inequality is higher than in other countries (Gijsberts 2002).

The perceptions often diverge from the objective data dependent on the respective position of the respondents; that is, those higher up tend to estimate inequality as less than it actually is, while those in the lower brackets perceive high inequality (Morris and Western 1999; Biester 2005; Lübker 2007). Similarly, whether inequality is considered fair or unjust, depends – not surprisingly - on positional, income and educational levels of the respective groups of respondents (Liebig and Schupp 2007), but also age, political-ideological orientation, beliefs in meritocratic values, individual biography and historical experiences have an impact on

attitudes. The long-term existence of welfare state traditions, the history of social conflict or economic crises create expectations and attitudes that determine the legitimacy of inequality (Kelley and Evans 1993; Hadler 2005; Therborn 2006).

Acceptance of inequality is, therefore, based on the existence of values and norms that are widely shared in a society (Forgang 1977; Austen 1999). These norms, however, change as well under the impact of social transformation. This was shown in a study that compared the attitudes in market and transition countries over a lengthy period of time (Evans et al. 1992). While the present findings showed divergences in the perception and acceptance of inequality, they had been much more similar before the economic changes of the 1970s and 1980s, leading to the conclusion that there had prevailed an “egalitarian Zeitgeist” also in market societies in that period. But it may also be argued that prosperity and rising general income levels in the decades prior to 1970’s made expectations of increasing equality appear realistic (Lutz 1984).

Subjective views of inequality reflect the complex interrelations between the institutions of the social system, the values and behavioral patterns of culture and the historical experiences. (Glatzer 2002; Atkinson 2007). There are differences as to the acceptance of economic inequality as fair or not, but on the whole the subjective views seem not to be very critical. Indeed it has been found that acceptance of inequality may even rise when the differentials increase (Austen 1999). Another study mentioned different tendencies, one emphasizing the need for redistribution, the other focusing on incentives (Svallfors 1993).

Thus, perceptions of rising inequality do not unanimously lead to demands for redistribution or to a stepping up of social conflict (Lübker 2007; Kenworthy and McCall 2008). This is a very astonishing fact given the degree of inequality changes; perhaps belief in the new growth theory which predicts lower growth rates in case of redistribution to curb inequality may account for it (Lübker 2007). But reasons for the tendency to accept inequality may lie also in the studies themselves because they usually restrict the range of inequality to the wage structure and to occupational and educational aspects, thus, leaving the very rich and the very poor out of sight.

### **Winning or losing out in the transformation: Return of bipolar inequality**

The fast and profound changes that have altered the economy during the last decades were caused by technological innovations, political reorientations, new management strategies and organizational restructuring, as well as by the impact of the global capital markets. The ongoing changes are not self-steering processes; they are the effect of political decisions, ideological reorientations and strategic interests, leading also to changes in values and

legitimacy, so that it can rightfully be considered as a “political-cultural” transformation (Fligstein 1996). This has been particularly so in the transition countries entering the world of market economies when these were undergoing themselves a profound change, although economic growth and the level of development were important factors, too. Whereas the transformation in China was accompanied by a spectacular and rapid economic growth, there was an economic downturn in Eastern Europe during the transition phase, which may have been responsible for the rise of income inequality there (Nee and Liedka 1997).

The economic transformation led to changes of the social relations at work, between the interest groups, in the restructuring in organizations and the reengineering of the corporation (Hammer and Champy 1994), but also in the employment and occupational structure of societies (Fürstenberg 2000). The promotion of equality of opportunity by introducing free market conditions resulted in rising inequality of outcomes which in had adverse effects on the equality of opportunity, as well as having a spilling-over effect to other areas like health, education etc. (Diamond and Giddens 2005; Esping-Anderson 2005).

In the large corporations the conceptions of control shifted to an increasing orientation on finance, in particular, on shareholder value (Fligstein and Shin 2004). Capital became partly disconnected from the production system and turned to purely financial investment opportunities, leading to a decreasing demand for labor and the increasing flexibilization of the cost structure of firms. The changes in production and enterprise strategy, the reductions of public employment as well as the generally adverse labor market conditions, resulted in an increase of unemployment, temporary employment, precarious work and dependent self-employment (Castel 1995; Burchell et al. 2007).

Competences and qualifications are determined by economic requirements, occupations are changing, “knowledge” is constantly redefined under the impact of technological-economic changes, devaluating the human capital of individuals and making them totally dependent on “the economy” for their “usefulness” (Castel 1996). This leads to a new inequality in the form of progressively shifting zones of those being considered employable and those deemed wanting (Kraemer and Bittlingmeier 2001).

Inequality under conditions of rapid socioeconomic change is difficult to grasp in terms of social structure. Although there is still “persistent inequality” based on social origin, education and occupation (Bowles et al. 2005) the increasing heterogeneity and pluralism within the social world of work defies conceptualization in terms of social strata or social classes. Nevertheless, the fact that in the process of economic change some win while others



lose is widely acknowledged. This concerns income, but also opportunities, prestige and subjective expectations.

The great importance of “knowledge” as a production factor in the modern economy led to a division between the new avant-garde of workers, the “knowledge workers”, providing mainly the necessary innovations for the corporate economy, and the “service workers” catering to the needs of households (Drucker 1993). But there prevails a more incisive distinction that is characteristic of our so-called “knowledge societies” and which is expressed by the concepts of inclusion and exclusion. For René Lenoir (1974) the “exclus” were those not benefiting from economic growth and development, constituting an “underclass” where social exclusion and poverty acted together. Under the present condition of the constant obsolescence of occupational competences, “inclusion” became connected with the access to and the command of the new technology and the information media as the precondition for employability (DiMaggio et al. 2004). This implied also a new inequality or bifurcation of work providing greater opportunities for some if they accept the pressure and downgrading of others who cannot or do not want to adapt (Fligstein and Shin 2004). The latter, however, are not just disadvantaged in finding a job or earning sufficient money to keep up their living standard, they are not included in society because they lack access or knowledge of the new cultural techniques.

Inclusion and exclusion go beyond work and employment to communication and social relations. Exclusion may start in the economic field, but to participate in the self-reproducing system of payments usually results also in exclusion from other relations (Luhmann 1995), even if there may be a new inclusion on a lower level (Stichweh 2000). Castel (1995) defines exclusion as “désaffiliation” with regard to relations of family, state, enterprise etc. resulting in the loss of “social citizenship” (Dean and Melrose 1999).

The terms of inclusion and exclusion do not challenge the basic assumptions on which the social, economic transformation rests, but places the responsibility for being excluded on the individuals themselves, on their lack of adequate competences, relations and attitudes.

Inclusion requires constant adaptation to the dominant projects of the knowledge society and of the promotion of globalization.

In spite of this “total” character exclusion does not denote class conditions and must be distinguished from exploitation: “... to associate exclusion from the meta-corporations with proletarianization is to invite confusion of abandonment with exploitation. The association suggests that the losers in the new economy are insufficiently compensated for their

contribution to production, whereas we have seen that what they are losing is the possibility to make *any* contribution to the economy.” (Sabel 1991: 45)

The class differentiation between capital and labor does not apply under these conditions, because not only is capital dominant, but “labor” has become too heterogeneous with regard to living conditions, interests and consciousness; it has turned into a global “multitude” (Hardt and Negri 2000). There is sharp polarization in society, but without forming concrete collectivities, so that one could characterize this constellation as class relations without classes (Kreckel 1992). Inclusion/exclusion is a socio-structural substitute of class analysis for a society that is project-oriented (Boltanski and Chiapello 1999); it does not imply a dichotomous relation of concrete groups of people with conflicting interests and values, but presupposes an undisputedly dominant perspective with regard to which one can only be “in” or “out”.

Economic inequality goes across employment status groups, as the forms of employment get more varied and the distinction between self-employed and employed persons becomes eroded. A survey based on income tax statistics in Germany (Merz 2004) showed that half of the self-employed persons earned far less than the lower half of the employed persons, but earnings are more unequally distributed among the self-employed. In the German study both groups of the rich self-employed and the highest-income group among the employees together constitute the wealthiest ten percent. But at the other end the number of solo-entrepreneurs and dependent self-employed, often working under precarious conditions, increased considerably. Similar circumstances can be found in other countries as well. The increasing differences between large and small enterprises goes far beyond what theorists before referred to as the dual structure of industry, because of the rising competition and the pressure exerted by the large corporations on their suppliers.

Although inequality is individual and relative, there is a widespread feeling of dichotomy between “those up there” and “us below” without clear dividing lines (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung 2006). In some studies a new underclass-feeling has been found to emerge (Neckel 2008) due to the increased polarization of conditions and prospects, but it is not confined to those considered poor. Also the middle-income strata feel frustrated because they feel the pressure from the economic changes, too, and develop feelings of exclusion and alienation, as shown in a study of the Australian situation (Pusey 2008). Both, the middle-income groups and the low income groups are heterogeneous reflecting the ambivalence of winning or losing by the changes; the latter comprises also an emerging global, but not cosmopolitan underclass of immigrants (Sassen 2005). The deterioration of the economic and social situation of the

groups of the better-off employees, the often dependent solo-entrepreneurs, the knowledge workers and the higher levels of the service workers etc. together with their increasing heterogeneity may be seen as a disappearance or even destruction of the middle strata of society (Bologna 2006).

### **Individuals subjected to change: Inequality and insecurity**

New aspects of inequality emerge in times of fast and profound changes which are marked especially by increasing insecurity (Groß 2001). The bipolar perception caused by the unequal, but constantly shifting distribution of chances and risks, is the hallmark of the present transformation.

Insecurity derives from the deterioration in job opportunities and income prospects and is aggravated by the pressure from the rising living standards and the costs to keep up to them which makes earnings a central concern. The rising insecurity has been furthered by the decreasing importance of the human factor in the total costs of enterprises, by the retrenchment of the welfare state and the dependence on global economic processes. The people get exposed more directly to the effects of global markets, global capital interests and the attempts of the states to catch up in terms of competitiveness. Thus, there is a vicious cycle working in the direction of increasing inequality and insecurity while trying to achieve sufficient economic growth rates which are said to be necessary for the well-being of the whole society.

Still there are differences between the societies with regard to the extent of inequality rises and the insecurity to which people are exposed, proving that institutions matter with regard to insecurity as well as inequality, for example with regard to the United States and the United Kingdom on one side and the various residual forms of welfare states in Europe (Atkinson 2004; Giddens and Diamond 2005; Bardhan et al. 2006).

Inequality becomes relative and individualistic when state, collective and legal protection decreases. For the individuals this means that self-responsibility is called upon with regard to keeping and developing their employability by investments in their “human capital”, to take over risks as entrepreneurs, and to making arrangements for the adversities of life. This “great risk shift” has been felt strongly in the United States (Hacker 2008), but with the decline of the welfare states and the integration process it made strides ahead also in Europe. For sociologists there has occurred a process of individualization in the transformation of modernity and the emergence of the “risk society” (Beck 1983; Beck 1986).

To keep up with the pace of change, to acquire constantly new knowledge, to develop the right motivation for success is difficult on the long run, more so, because all this does not

guarantee employment, income and success (Sen 1997). This ambivalence of high aspirations and demands on one hand and great insecurity and frustration on the other hand frequently causes anxiety (Jacobs and Newman 2006). The experience is especially marked among middle-aged persons who are those most prone to perceive social injustice in the increasing inequality and poverty (Robila 2006). Social exclusion and economic pressure are felt by many people, but the patterns are still unclear and there are differences between countries. Distress is an issue especially in those societies which had to undergo not only the economic transformation of globalization, but also the transition from socialism to the market system (Hraba et al. 1994; Standing and Zsoldos 2001; Linz and Semykina 2007).

Besides increasing demands regarding qualifications and risk-taking another also ambivalent cause of insecurity and of inequality, lies in the alleged greater autonomy and freedom for people with regard to their work and career in the flexible, learning organizations. Since the driving force is “efficiency”, which really means bigger profits, rise of the share value and more market power, called “competitiveness”, “autonomy” is another name for control leading to “domination by autonomy” (Moldaschl 2001). In the organizations new forms of control become institutionalized placing stress on the outcome of work and on indirect measures like evaluation data, standards of work or service, indicators of performance in the enterprises as well as in the integration process within the EU using the “open method of coordination”. This raises feelings of being under scrutiny, irrespective of the fact that the measures of control are impersonal, seemingly objective and often participatory.

There are, moreover, high demands on the personal commitment and the tacit knowledge, of investing subjective aspects in one’s work in order to raise the dynamic capabilities for the “art of continuous change” of the “relentlessly shifting organization” (Brown and Eisenhardt 1997). The individuals are to become “intrapreneurs”, developing and applying their creativity for the good of the firm. These high demands on qualification, commitment and creativity which are asked especially of lower and middle managers are, however, in most cases not compensated by more security and material benefits, but accompanied by intensification of work and the ever-present threat of unemployment. Motivation, apart from being regarded as an individual attitude choice (Ng and Wang 2001; Vakola and Nikolaou 2005), is kept up by the spreading of a sense of constant panic as to the further course of the economy or the fate of the organization one works for, and by the constantly repeated rhetoric of the “globalization pressures”. There are few possibilities for individuals to escape from the pressure: They can quit as employees and become self-employed which is an exit strategy

liable to increase rather than decrease insecurity, while voice strategies are reduced in spite of the participation rhetoric.

The insecurity connected with the present economic inequality is, therefore, a threefold one: it derives from the rapid changes in the occupational and employment structure, from the individualization of risk, and from the control and the new demands regarding work in the organizations. Rising inequality in form of income is accompanied by a rise of insecurity for many people transforming the social structure into a constantly shifting processing of individual conditions, chances and risks (Berger and Konietzka 2001).

### **Lifting off: A new global class?**

As to the top earnings the managers of the global corporations and the big investment funds have been the greatest winners of the economic-political changes. Among the group of managers incomes vary considerably between earnings that lie only slightly above those of the qualified workers and astronomically high gratifications of the heads of the most important corporations and financial institutions. The gap between the latter and the rest of the working populace gets so large that explanations of differentials based on qualification, hierarchy and occupation seem irrelevant. Atkinson (2007: 55 pp) suggests two reasons for this: firstly the shock of the exogenous impact of the capital market placing more importance on short-run success than on long-run stability, and secondly, the superstar theory, that is, the emphasis on excellence and talent creates a new level above the occupational/hierarchy structure of job differentials.

Although still rare, research interests have turned to the composition of executive payments (Kabir 2008). There is considerable variety among individual firms and managers and each corporation has its own system of executive compensation, but for many top executives the salary makes up a decreasing part of their total incomes in recent years, while the share of bonuses for good performance and stock-options has increased. This was done to streamline their interests with those of the capital investors. Many top managers of large corporations and financial institutions join the group of the world's very rich people, thus becoming detached more and more from the earnings system prevailing in their home country (Skocpol 2004). Their income and wealth, that amounts to many times of even those of the well-to-do groups in their respective countries "set them apart from society" (Giddens 2004).

Nevertheless, according to their own views their wealth is socially compatible (Maeder and Streuli 2002). This self-perception of justified wealth has a long tradition and for modern times was based on the theory of industrial economics seeing this wealth as the necessary capital accumulation for investments in productive capacity. The very wealthy people today,

however, invest to a large degree in financial speculations rather than in the production sector; even the industrial enterprises have enlarged their financial side of business. Whether these financial capital flows benefit all people, is up for doubt, since it shifts profit interests to fields where labor is not needed anymore.

Sometimes the very rich and the heads of the global corporations and institutions are referred to as a capitalist class that is “dominant economically, politically and culturally” (Bottomore 1989: 10), but demonstrates also new traits. Its basis is said to be the interpenetration of industrial, commercial and financial capital producing a new historic form of capital culminating in the power of the finance capitalists (Zeitlin 1989). Even if they may be seen as a new global class because of the wealth and the influence they command, they are also very heterogeneous comprising individuals, families, but especially organizations headed by personally changing top managers. What really unites economic, managerial and political elites around the world, is the dedication to globalization and the active attitude in the process of economic change.

### **Actors, the power to change and the production of culture**

The differentiation between “making” and “experiencing” changes lies at the bottom of what is here referred to as the new dichotomy between actors and subjects in the present transformation process. The power of the actors is not necessarily based on “power over” others, but on “power to” (Law 1991), which may be also termed “structural” power (Gill and Law 1989), however, it is executed by actors, who are capable and intent on driving change, are working together, relating with one another and developing strategies. There has been intention behind economic globalization, as Sklair (2001) tried to show in his interviews of the CEOs of the “Fortune 500” Power, so that it must be understood as a project and not as a self-steering process.

There is inequality regarding the chances to take an active part in the transformation which is based on factors like social position, political influence, and personal ability and dedication, but also on the ties of influence and loyalty going far beyond the information aspect stressed in studies on networks (Burt 1992), forming clan- and clublike structures, interlocking directorates, but also interorganizational networks across business, consulting firms, politics and media (Abrahamson and Fombrun 1992). In spite of the fact that sometimes individuals may have great power, usually it is networks of powerful actors who can “macrostructure reality” (Callon and Latour 1981).

But also wealth itself confers a subjective sense of power resulting in “hyperagency” as the “particular social capacity to create rather than simply work within given institutions”

(Schervish 1994: 2). These active interventions are usually combined with a tendency to moralize by the individuals, as autobiographical presentations of wealthy and successful persons convey (Schervish et al. 1994).

Since organizations are the main instrument and object to enact change, they are transformed into places for “leading and coping with change” (Woodward and Hendry 2004). To develop the proper attitude towards change is depicted by a huge management literature as a precondition for success. Introducing and implementing changes in organizations and work processes is identified with success, even if the outcome in monetary terms cannot be measured directly (Lines 2005). Non-tenure conditions for managers and employees are considered conducive to this attitude towards change (Musteen et al. 2006), thus, a “stick strategy” of motivation gets applied which is camouflaged as freedom and self-determination. Beside the control over human, social as well as material resources taking an active part in change requires self-confidence as well as power to convince others and spread the message of change. The power to change becomes effective also by the diffusion of rhetoric and myths. The knowledge for action must spread and become institutionalized (Alvarez 1998). Changing the ways people go about their work, think about what is valuable and useful in life and in society requires making the new state of the world and the measures bringing it about seem legitimate, necessary, self-evident. This, however, cannot be done on the basis of the existing values and norms, but these must be changed, too, which is done by delegitimizing the past and by proposing new virtues and new aims, thus, actively producing a new dominant culture (Abrahamson and Fombrun 1992) in which change is good in itself, opportunism and openly striving for economic gain are acceptable forms of behavior and everything is measured by its utility and efficiency. Behind all this one may be led to assume a common ideology of the transnational class (Sklair 2001), but the emergence of the new cultural hegemony is not so simple because of its changing, ambivalent and contradictory nature. “Power is about *whose* metaphor brings worlds together, and holds them there” (Star 1991: 52). Therefore rhetoric is very important because language shapes the mind and the ways of thinking. Every faculty or resource that is economically useful, is called “capital”; efficiency and competitiveness are the main goals of economic action, employability and accountability constitute the basis of valuation. Beyond rhetoric and metaphors institutionalization by altering the legal norms and implementation by changing the social norms are required. These norms themselves are constantly adapted to the requirements of the economy, so that the diffusion of ideas, techniques and values and the legal-normative institutionalization combine to promote a culture of continual change.

Important for the production of a new society and culture are the factors for elite selection. Today there is a remarkably strong elitist orientation which emphasizes achievement, success and an attitude of assuming for oneself the “power to change anything” (Patterson 2008). Although it is suggested that this can be developed by anybody, it is obviously restricted to the chosen few, to the top league, the high potentials. New elites mean also new principles of social structure, the criteria for “distanciation” rather than differentiation, being based on wealth, power through relations and useful knowledge, and the proper attitude to change, while factors like occupation or education have lost much of their social significance. The power to change which the actors of the present transformation bring to bear, is not simply economic, but it is cultural and social as well; the inequality expressed in income and wealth differentials is only the external signal of a far-reaching reorientation of society and culture, and there is a political aspect to it that adds a further dimension to the problem of inequality.

### **Politics of change and its consequences for inequality**

The inequality of actors and subjects evokes reminiscences of the “Power Elite” (Mills 1956) vis-à-vis the powerless masses. At present the power elite is not only a national one, but a transnational one, so that their power has grave implications for national politics and also for democracy on the level of the individual state. The fact that powerful actors like the multinational corporations, the globally active financial institutions and their CEOs as well as all those catering to them dominate the economic sphere places great pressure on national governments and on their policies, although it was politics in the major states that pushed neo-liberalism and forced other national governments to comply (Fourcade-Gourinchas and Babb 2002). Globalization causes economic concerns to get to a great extent out of reach of national governments’ regulating power; this has been connected by some with the “end of conventional politics” in the sense of autonomous political goals of states. This makes it increasingly difficult also for political parties representing leftist traditions to pursue social policies that run counter to capital and corporate interests. The consequence is that the economic power of the corporations and financial circles is replacing the political power of the people realizing instead the capitalist project of combining economic and political power (Hardt and Negri 2000).

Political paradigms have shifted from an egalitarian perspective of redistribution to a perspective legitimizing identity and difference leading to increasing influence of the rich and mighty in the political sphere (Fraser 1997). Some political scientists today criticize this as “constitutionalizing inequality” (Gill 2002) by depoliticizing economic interests, which are



not anymore subjected to democratic political choices in the “new political economy of disciplinary neo-liberalism” (Gill 1995: 50). This invites critique suggesting that “the economy” has turned against society (Perret and Roustang 1993). But critique is rare and not widely listened to, and the surveys on the subjective attitudes to inequality show a relative acquiescence of the people themselves.

There are different reasons for the fact that the rising economic inequality is not (yet) a big political issue and that many people seem to accept the new conditions. One of the reasons for the rich countries may lie in the fact that the majority of people are still fairly well-off due to the preceding period of relatively high growth rates and welfare state politics. Those in difficult economic situations are still a minority although a growing one, are very heterogeneous and do not voice their discontent politically. Still redistribution policies seem to have a low appeal, for the United States this is traditionally so (Lenz 2004).

As the feelings of insecurity and powerlessness, the frustration with the deterioration of work and living conditions, the sense of loss as effect of the rapid changes increase, some protest is raised among those who perceive their incomes as unjust (Brady 2004). Manifestations of discontent raise concern because they are not channeled anymore in the conventional ways of interest representation and democratic political parties. Thus, there is concern about dangers to democracy and the liberal values on which it rests, because of the appeal extreme right-wing parties have gained (Flecker 2007), or by political activist groups and those aiming at recognition in the integration processes.

The concern with the relation between inequality and democracy can be traced back to very old discussions (Midlarski 1997). Today it still centers on the problem of unequal political participation and representation, since the most frequent reaction on the side of all those experiencing the negative effects of inequality and insecurity is “de-articulation” (Svallfors 2006), which is on one hand the consequence of the decline of union power and on the other hand is manifest in elections and in political participation betraying the relative loss of interest and trust in politics among many people.

Political participation has become more stratified as incomes have diverged (Freeman 2004), but also the polarization regarding political representation between the disadvantaged and the advantaged who are more active politically and make themselves better heard by political representatives and governments has become more pronounced (APSA 2004; Verba et al. 2004). Findings have indicated a rising “political alienation” in the United States that is connected with economic inequality and has adverse effects on democracy. But also in European societies there is a close relation between political alienation and precarious

economic situation, especially where retrenchment in social security has been pronounced or where expectations in the welfare state like in Sweden are so high that even slight cuts are resented (Oskarson 2007). Thus, the economic inequality is connected closely with political inequality both with respect to participation and representation and will lead to social conflicts the bases as well as the manifestations of which are economic and political.

### **Conclusion**

The present economic and social transformation which we could not portray here in its diversity and with all the pertinent interrelations, results in a change in the relations between rich and poor not only by degrees, but in kind by its impact on the social and political relations. Inequality does not only rise due to the restructuring of enterprises, global strategies of corporations and neo-liberal policies, but there develops an aspect of inequality that has to do with the fast changes and reforms and the attitudes and experiences of people in this process. In this sense I have introduced here the concepts of “actors” and “subjects” as a dimension of inequality which does not replace other forms of unequal conditions, but adds an additional aspect to them. Still the consequences of transformation are difficult to establish by identifying groups of people differently affected; there are some who have gained considerably and others who perceive chances for individual career and success or for a self-determined life, and there are the many who feel they can just cope with changes, while still others experience economic deprivation, social insecurity and political alienation. It is difficult to grasp these diverse conditions, experiences and expectations in structural terms in the context of the constantly and rapidly changing reality, thus, we can but try to point out the multidimensional and diverse aspects of inequality which are expressive of the social transformation as an ongoing process. As for the future of our economies and societies it seems crucial to understand the necessity of a normative foundation reducing the forces of polarization, and that therefore the present divergence of the rich and powerful oriented at a global field of action and of those subjected to and affected by the changes constitutes a problem of socioeconomic, cultural and political significance.

## Bibliography:

Abrahamson, Eric, and Charles J. Fombrun. 1992. "Forging the iron cage: Interorganizational networks and the production of macro-culture." *Journal of Management Studies* 29:175-194.

Aerni, Victor, Christian de Juniac, Bruce M. Holley, and Tjun Tang. 2007. "Tapping human assets to sustain growth: Global Wealth 2007." URL: <http://www.asiaing.com/global-wealth-2007-boston-consulting-group>.

Alvarez, José Luis. 1998. "The sociological tradition and the spread and institutionalization of knowledge for action." Pp. 13-57 in *The Diffusion and Consumption of Business Knowledge*, edited by José Luis Alvarez. New York: St. Martin's Press.

APSA. 2004. "American democracy in an age of rising inequality." American Political Science Association. URL: <http://www.apsanet.org/imgtest/taskforcereport.pdf>

Atkinson, Anthony B. 2004. "Increased income inequality in OECD countries and the redistributive impact of the government budget." Pp. 221-248 in *Inequality, Growth and Poverty in an Era of Liberalization and Globalization*, edited by Giovanni A. Cornia. Oxford: Oxford UP.

Atkinson, Anthony B. 2007. "The distribution of earnings in OECD countries." *International Labour Review* 146(1-2): 41-60.

Atkinson, Anthony B., and Andrea Brandolini. 2006. "From earnings dispersion to income inequality." Pp. 35-62 in *Inequality and Economic Integration*, edited by Francesco Farina and Ernesto Savaglio. New York: Routledge.

Austen, Siobhan. 1999. "Norms of inequality." *Journal of Economic Issues* XXXIII (2): 435-442.

Bardhan, Pranab K., Samuel Bowles, and Michael Wallerstein (eds.). 2006. *Globalization and Egalitarian Redistribution*. New York-Princeton-Oxford: Russell Sage Foundation and Princeton UP.

Beck, Ulrich. 1983. "Jenseits von Stand und Klasse? Soziale Ungleichheiten, gesellschaftliche Individualisierungsprozesse und die Entstehung neuer sozialer Formationen und Identitäten." Pp. 35-74 in *Soziale Ungleichheiten. Soziale Welt-Sonderband 2*, edited by Reinhard Kreckel. Göttingen: Schwartz.

Beck, Ulrich. 1986. *Risikogesellschaft. Auf dem Weg in eine andere Moderne*. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp.

Berger, Peter A., and Stefan Hradil (ed.). 1990. *Lebenslagen, Lebensläufe, Lebensstile*. Göttingen: Schwartz.

Berger, Peter A., and Dirk Konietzka (eds.). 2001. *Die Erwerbsgesellschaft. Neue Ungleichheiten und Unsicherheiten*. Opladen: Leske & Budrich.

- Biester, Christoph. 2005. *Determinanten der Wahrnehmung sozialer Ungleichheit. Sekundäranalyse einer Befragung der Kölner Stadtbevölkerung*. Berlin: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Berlin.
- Blau, Francine D., and Lawrence M. Kahn. 2002. *At Home and Abroad: U.S. Labor Market Performance in International Perspective*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Bologna, Sergio. 2006. *Die Zerstörung der Mittelschichten. Thesen zur neuen Selbständigkeit*. Graz: Nausner & Nausner.
- Boltanski, Luc, and Eve Chiapello. 1999. *Le nouvel esprit du capitalisme*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Bottomore, Tom. 1989. "The capitalist class." Pp. 1-18 in *The Capitalist Class: An International Study*, edited by Tom Bottomore and Robert J. Brym. New York et al.: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Bowles, Samuel, Herbert Gintis, and Melissa Osborne Groves (eds.). 2005. *Unequal Chances: Family Background and Economic Success*. Princeton-New York: Princeton UP-Russell Sage.
- Brady, Henry E. 2004. "An analytical perspective on participatory inequality and income inequality. Pp. 667-702 in *Social Inequality*, edited by Kathryn M. Neckerman. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Brown, Shona L., and Kathleen M. Eisenhardt. 1997. "The art of continuous change: Linking complexity theory and time-paced evolution in relentlessly shifting organizations." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 42(1): 1-34.
- Burchell, Brendan J. et al. 2007. *Job Insecurity and Work Intensification: Flexibility and the Changing Boundaries of Work*. York, U. K.: Joseph Rowntree Foundation: YPS.
- Burt, Ronald S. 1992. *Structural Holes: The Social Structure of Competition*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Callon, Michel, and Bruno Latour. 1981. « Unscrewing the big leviathan. How do actors macrosstructure reality ? » Pp. 277-303 in *Advances in Social Theory and Methodology*, edited by Karin Knorr and Aaron Cicourel. Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Castel, Robert. 1995. *Les métamorphoses de la question sociale*. Paris: Fayard.
- Castel, Robert. 1996. "Work and usefulness to the world." *International Labour Review* 135(6): 615-622.
- Cornia, Giovanni Andrea, Tony Addison, and Sampsa Kiiski. 2004. "Income distribution changes and their impact in the Post-Second World War period." Pp. 26-54 in *Inequality, Growth and Poverty in an Era of Liberalization and Globalization*, edited by Cornia, Giovanni Andrea. Oxford: Oxford UP.
- Davies, James, Susanna Sandstrom, Anthony Shorrocks, and Edward Wolff. 2008. *The World Distribution of Household Wealth*. Discussion Paper No. 2008/03. United Nations University (UNU-WIDER). URL: <http://www.wider.unu.edu>

- Dean, Hartley, and Margaret Melrose. 1999. *Poverty, Riches and Social Citizenship*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Diamond, Patrick, and Anthony Giddens. 2005. "The new egalitarianism: Economic inequality in the UK." Pp. 101-119 in *The New Egalitarianism*, edited by Anthony Giddens and Patrick Diamond. Cambridge, UK-Malden, MA: Polity Press.
- DiMaggio, Paul et al. 2004. "Digital inequality: From unequal access to differentiated use." Pp. 355-400 in *Social Inequality*, edited by Kathryn M. Neckerman. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Drucker, Peter. 1993. *Post-Capitalist Society*. New York: Harper Business.
- Esping-Anderson, Gosta. 2005. "Inequalities of incomes and opportunities." Pp. 8-38 in *The New Egalitarianism*, edited by Anthony Giddens and Patrick Diamond. Cambridge, UK-Malden, MA: Polity Press, 8-38.
- Evans, M.D.R., Jonathan Kelley, and Tamas Kolosi. 1992. "Images of class: Public perceptions in Hungary and Australia." *American Sociological Review* 57: 461-482.
- Flecker, Jörg (ed.). 2007. *Changing Working Life and the Appeal of the Extreme Right*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Fligstein, Neil. 1996. "Markets as Politics: A Political-Cultural Approach to Market Institutions." *American Sociological Review* 61: 656-673.
- Fligstein, Neil, and Taek-Jin Shin. 2004. "The shareholder value society: A review of the changes in working conditions and inequality in the United States, 1976-2000." Pp. 401-432 in *Social Inequality*, edited by Kathryn M. Neckerman. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Forgang, William G. 1977. "Inequality and equity in the distribution of income and wealth." *Forum for Social Economics* 7 (2), 13-30.
- Fourcade-Gourinchas, Marion, and Sarah L. Babb. 2002. "The rebirth of the liberal creed: Paths to neoliberalism in four countries." *American Journal of Sociology* 108 (2): 533-579.
- Fraser, Nancy. 1997. *Justice Interruptus*. New York: Routledge.
- Freeman, Richard B. 2004. "What, me vote?" Pp. 703-728 in *Social Inequality*, edited by Kathryn M. Neckerman. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Freeman, Richard B., and Lawrence F. Katz. 1995. *Differences and Changes in Wage Structures*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.
- Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (ed.). 2006. *Gesellschaft im Reformprozess*. Bonn: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.
- Fürstenberg, Friedrich. 2000. *Berufsgesellschaft in der Krise. Auslaufmodell oder Zukunftspotential?* Berlin: edition sigma.

- Giddens, Anthony. 2004. "We can and should take action if the earnings of the rich set them apart from society". *New Statesman*. 27 September: 50-53.
- Giddens, Anthony, and Patrick Diamond (eds.). 2005. *The New Egalitarianism*. Cambridge, UK-Malden, MA: Polity Press.
- Gijsberts, Mérove. 2002. "The legitimation of income inequality in state-socialist and market societies." *Acta Sociologica* 45(4): 269-285.
- Gill, Stephen. 1995. "Globalisation, market civilization, and disciplinary neoliberalism." *Millennium* 23(3): 399-423.
- Gill, Stephen. 2002. "Constitutionalizing inequality and the clash of globalizations." *International Relations Review* 4(2): 47-65.
- Gill, Stephen, and David Law. 1989. "Global hegemony and the structural power of capital." *International Studies Quarterly* 33(4): 475-499.
- Glatzer, Wolfgang. 2002. "Rich and poor as dividing and integrating forces of society – introduction." Pp. 1-8 in *Rich and Poor. Disparities, Perceptions, Concomitants*, edited by Wolfgang Glatzer. Dordrecht-Boston-London: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Goesling, Brian. 2001. "Changing income inequalities within and between nations: New evidence." *American Sociological Review* 66(5): 745-761.
- Groß, Martin. 2001. "Auswirkungen des Wandels der Erwerbsgesellschaft auf soziale Ungleichheit. Effekte befristeter Beschäftigung auf Einkommensungleichheit." Pp. 119-155 in *Die Erwerbsgesellschaft. Neue Ungleichheiten und Unsicherheiten*, edited by Peter A. Berger and Dirk Konietzka. Opladen: Leske & Budrich.
- Hacker, Jacob S. 2008. *The Great Risk Shift: The New Economic Insecurity and the Decline of the American Dream*. Oxford: Oxford UP.
- Hadler, Markus. 2005. "Why do people accept different income ratios? A multi-level comparison of thirty countries." *Acta Sociologica* 48(2): 131-154.
- Hammer, Michael, and James Champy. 1994. *Reengineering the Corporation: A Manifesto for Business Revolution*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Hardt, Michael, and Antonio Negri. 2000. *Empire*. Cambridge, MA.: Harvard UP.
- Hauser, Richard, and Irene Becker. 2002. "Inequalities between income and wealth: The case of Germany in 1998." Pp. 33-43 in *Rich and Poor. Disparities, Perceptions, Concomitants*, edited by Wolfgang Glatzer. Dordrecht-Boston-London: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Hraba, Joseph, Frederick Lorenz, Gang Lee, and Zdenka Pechacova. 1994. "Economic change, inequality and distress in the Czech Republic." *Czech Sociological Review* 2(2): 173-185.

- Jacobs, Elisabeth, and Kathryn Newman. 2006. "Rising angst? Change and stability in perceptions of economic insecurity." Social Science Research Council (SSRC). URL: [http://privatizationofrisk.ssrc.org/Jacobs\\_Newman/](http://privatizationofrisk.ssrc.org/Jacobs_Newman/).
- Kabir, Rezaul (ed.). 2008. "International perspectives on executive compensation." *Journal of Multinational Financial Management* 18(1).
- Kaun, David E. 2008. "Attitudes toward inequality: Racism and other varieties of American exceptionalism." *Journal of Socio-Economics* 37(2): 821-835.
- Kelley, Jonathan, and M. D. R. Evans. 1993. "The legitimation of inequality: Occupational earnings in nine nations." *American Journal of Sociology* 99(1): 75-126.
- Kelley, Jonathan, and Krzysztof Zagorski. 2004. "Economic change and the legitimation of inequality: The transition from socialism to the free market in Central-East Europe." *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 22: 319-364.
- Kenworthy, Lane, and Leslie McCall. 2008. "Inequality, public opinion and redistribution." *Socio-Economic Review* 6: 35-68.
- Kerr, Clark. 1969. *Marshall, Marx and Modern Times: The Multi-Dimensional Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
- Kraemer, Klaus, and Uwe H. Bittlingmayer. 2001. „Soziale Polarisierung durch Wissen. Zum Wandel der Arbeitsmarktchancen in der ‚Wissengesellschaft‘.“ Pp. 313-329 in *Die Erwerbsgesellschaft. Neue Ungleichheiten und Unsicherheiten*, edited by Peter A. Berger and Dirk Konietzka. Opladen: Leske & Budrich.
- Kreckel, Reinhard. 1992. *Politische Soziologie der sozialen Ungleichheit*. Frankfurt/M.: Campus.
- Kunovich, Sheri, and Kazimierz M. Slomczynski. 2007. "Systems of distribution and a sense of equity: A multilevel analysis of meritocratic attitudes in post-industrial societies." *European Sociological Review* 23(5): 649-663.
- Law, John. 1991. "Power, discretion and strategy." Pp. 165-191 in *A Sociology of Monsters: Essays on Power, Technology and Domination*, edited by John Law. London: Routledge.
- Lemel, Yannick, and Heinz-Herbert Noll (eds.). 2002. *Changing Structures of Inequality: A Comparative Perspective*. Montreal et al.: McGill-Queen's UP.
- Lenoir, Réne. 1974. *Les Exclus. Un Français sur dix*. Paris: Seuil.
- Lenz, Gabriel S. 2004. « The consequences of income inequality for redistributive policy in the United States.» Pp. 797-820 in *Social Inequality*, edited by Kathryn M. Neckerman. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Liebig, Stefan, and Jürgen Schupp. 2007. "Gerechtigkeitsprobleme im Wohlfahrtsstaat: Besteuerung, wohlfahrtsstaatliche Transfers und die Gerechtigkeit des eigenen Erwerbseinkommens." *Wirtschaftspsychologie* 4: 83-98.

- Lines, Rune. 2005. "The structure and function of attitudes toward organizational change." *Human Resource Development Review* 4(1): 8-32.
- Linz, Susan, and Anastasia Semykina. 2007. *How do workers fare during transition? Perceptions of job insecurity among Russian workers, 1995-2004*. William Davidson Institute Working Paper No. 871.
- Lübker, Malte. 2007. "Inequality and the demand for redistribution: Are the assumptions of the new growth theory valid?" *Socio-Economic Review* 5: 117-148.
- Luhmann, Niklas (ed.). 1985. *Soziale Differenzierung*. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag.
- Luhmann, Niklas. 1995. "Inklusion und Exklusion". Pp. 237-264 in *Aufklärung 6*, edited by Niklas Luhmann. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag.
- Lutz, Burkart. 1984. *Der kurze Traum immerwährender Prosperität*. Frankfurt/Main: Campus.
- Maeder, Ueli and Elisa Streuli. 2002. „On wealth and social compatibility.“ *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 28(2): 339-357.
- Merrill Lynch/Capgemini. 2007. "World Wealth Report 2007." URL: <http://www.ml.com/media/79882.pdf>
- Merz, Joachim. 2004. "Reichtum in Deutschland. Mikroanalytische Ergebnisse der Einkommenssteuerstatistik für Selbständige und abhängig Beschäftigte." *Perspektiven der Wirtschaftspolitik* 5(2): 105-126.
- Midlarski, Manus I. (ed.). 1997. *Inequality, Democracy, and Economic Development*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
- Mills, Charles Wright. 1956. *The Power Elite*. London-Oxford-New York: Oxford UP.
- Moldaschl, Manfred. 2001. "Herrschaft durch Autonomie – Dezentralisierung und widersprüchliche Arbeitsanforderungen." Pp. 132-164 in *Entwicklungsperspektiven von Arbeit*, edited by Burkart Lutz. Berlin: Akademie Verlag.
- Morris, Martina, and Bruce Western. 1999. "Inequality in Earnings at the Close of the Twentieth Century." *Annual Review of Sociology* 25: 623-657.
- Musteen, Martina, Vincent L. Barker III, and Virginia L. Baeten. 2006. "CEO attributes associated with attitude toward change: The direct and moderating effects of CEO tenure." *Journal of Business Research* 59(5): 604-612.
- Myles, John. 2003. "Where have all the sociologists gone? Explaining economic inequality." *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 28(4): 551-559.
- Neckel, Sighart. 2008. "Die gefühlte Unterschicht. Vom Wandel der sozialen Selbsteinschätzung." Pp. 19-40 in *Unterschicht*, edited by Rolf Lindner and Lutz Musner. Freiburg i.Br.-Berlin-Wien: Rombach Verlag.



- Neckerman, Kathryn M. (ed.). 2004. *Social Inequality*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Nee, Viktor, and Raymon Liedka. 1997. "Markets and inequality in the transition from state socialism." Pp. 202-224 in *Inequality, Democracy, and Economic Development*, edited by Manus I. Midlarski. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 202-224.
- Ng, Yew-Kwang, and Jianguo Wang. 2001. "Attitude choice, economic change, and welfare." *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 45(3): 279-291.
- Nolan, Brian. 2007. "A Comparative Perspective on the Development of Poverty and Exclusion in European Societies: International Policy Analysis." Berlin: Friedrich Ebert-Stiftung. URL: <http://www.fes.de/internationalepolitik>
- Nollmann, Gerd, and Hermann Strasser. 2002. "Armut und Reichtum in Deutschland." *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte B* 29-30. Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. URL: [http://www.bpb.de/publikationen/TIKE8T,3,0,Armut\\_und\\_Reichtum\\_in\\_Deutschland.html](http://www.bpb.de/publikationen/TIKE8T,3,0,Armut_und_Reichtum_in_Deutschland.html)
- Osberg, Lars, and Timothy Smeeding. 2006. "'Fair' inequality? Attitudes toward pay differentials: The United States in comparative perspective." *American Sociological Review* 71(3): 450-473.
- Oskarson, Maria. 2007. "Social risk, policy dissatisfaction, and political alienation: A comparison of six European countries." Pp. 117-148 in *The Political Sociology of the Welfare State*, edited by Stefan Svallfors. Stanford, CA: Stanford UP.
- Ossowski, Stanislaw. 1962. *Die Klassenstruktur im sozialen Bewusstsein*. Neuwied-Berlin: Luchterhand.
- Pakulski, Jan, and Malcolm Waters. 1996. *The Death of Class*. London: Sage.
- Parkin, Frank. 1971. *Class Inequality and Political Order*. New York: Praeger.
- Patterson, Kerry et al. 2008. *Influencer: The Power to Change Anything*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Perret, Bernard, and Guy Roustang. 1993. *L'économie contre la société*. Paris : Seuil.
- Pusey, Michael. 2008. *The Experience of Middle Australia: The Dark Side of Reform*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
- Robila, Mihaela. 2006. "Economic pressure and social exclusion in Europe." *The Social Science Journal* 43(1): 85-97.
- Sabel, Charles. 1991. "Moebius-strip organizations and open labour markets: Some consequences of the reintegration of conception and execution in a volatile economy." Pp. 23-61 in *Social Theory for a Changing Society*, edited by Pierre Bourdieu and James S. Coleman. Boulder-New York: Westview Press-Russell Sage.
- Sassen, Saskia. 2005. "New global classes: Implications for politics." Pp. 143-153 in *The New Egalitarianism* edited by Anthony Giddens and Patrick Diamond. Cambridge, UK-Malden, MA: Polity Press.

Savaglio, Ernesto. 2006. "Three approaches to the analysis of multidimensional inequality." Pp. 269-283 in *Inequality and Economic Integration*, edited by Francesco Farina and Ernesto Savaglio. New York: Routledge.

Schervish, Paul G. 1994: "Introduction: The wealthy and the world of wealth." Pp. 1-17 in *Gospels of Wealth: How the Rich Portray Their Lives*, edited by Paul G. Schervish, Palton E. Coutsoukis and Ethan Lewis. Westport, CT-London: Praeger.

Schervish, Paul G., Palton E. Coutsoukis, and Ethan Lewis. 1994. *Gospels of Wealth: How the Rich Portray Their Lives*. Westport, CT-London: Praeger.

Schwinn, Thomas (ed.). 2004. *Differenzierung und soziale Ungleichheit*. Frankfurt/Main: Humanities Online.

Sen, Amartya K. 1997. "Inequality, unemployment and contemporary Europe." *International Labour Review* 136(2): 155-172.

Shavit, Yossi, and Hans-Peter Blossfeld (eds.). 1993. *Persistent Inequality: Changing Educational Attainment in Thirteen Countries*. Boulder-San Francisco-Oxford: Westview Press.

Sklair, Leslie. 2001. *The Transnational Capitalist Class*. Malden, MA-Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Skocpol, Theda. 2004. "Civic transformation and inequality in the contemporary United States." Pp. 729-767 in *Social Inequality* edited by Kathryn M. Neckerman. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Standing, Guy, and László Zsoldos. 2001. *Coping with insecurity: The Ukrainian people's security survey*. Geneva: ILO.

Star, Susan Leigh. 1991. „Power, technologies and the phenomenology of conventions: on being allergic to onions.“ Pp. 26-56 in *A Sociology of Monsters. Essays on Power, Technology and Domination*, edited by John Law. London-New York: Routledge.

Stichweh, Rudolf. 2000. "Systemtheorie der Exklusion." Pp. 85-102 in *Die Weltgesellschaft*, edited by Rudolf Stichweh. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp.

Svallfors, Stefan. 1993. "Dimensions of inequality: A comparison of attitudes in Sweden and Britain." *European Sociological Review* 9(3): 267-287.

Svallfors, Stefan. (ed.). 2005. *Analyzing Inequality: Life Chances and Social Mobility in Comparative Perspective*. Stanford, CA: Stanford UP.

Svallfors, Stefan. 2006. *The Moral Economy of Class: Class and Attitudes in Comparative Perspective*. Stanford, CA: Stanford UP.

Therborn, Göran. 2001. "Globalization and inequality." *Soziale Welt* 52(4): 449-476.

Therborn, Göran. 2006. "Meaning, mechanisms, patterns, and forces: An introduction." Pp. 1-58 in *Inequalities of the World*, edited by Göran Therborn. London-New York: Verso.

Tilly, Charles. 1998. *Durable Inequality*. Berkeley-Los Angeles-London: University of California Press.

Vakola, Maria, and Ioannis Nikolaou. 2005. "Attitudes towards organizational change: What is the role of employees' stress and commitment." *SSRN. Employee Relations* 27: 160-174.

Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehmann Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady. 2004. "Political equality: What do we know about it?" Pp. 635-666 in *Social Inequality*, edited by Kathryn M. Neckerman. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Woodward, Sally, and Chris Hendry. 2004. "Leading and coping with change." *Journal of Change Management* 4(2): 155-183.

Zeitlin, Maurice. 1989. *The Large Corporation and Contemporary Classes*. New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University Press.