Conceptual, Theoretical and Ethical Problems in

The Vertical Mosaic

by

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Abstract

The Vertical Mosaic is re-examined and an 'internal' critique
of its multiple conceptual, theoretical and ethical problems is pro-
vided. Porter's value position in a 1961 essay is outlined and set up
as a 'bench-mark' for evaluating the consistency of his 1965 value
position. Value inconsistency is discovered in the form of a 'strategy
of respectability,' consisting of five 'tactics.' This strategy is then
drawn upon throughout the essay to explicate some of Porter's con-
ceptual and theoretical errors.

These errors involve his treatment of class, power and demo-
cracy. It is argued that Porter's important distinction between "real
middle class" and "middle majority" violates his original position on
class, and is inadequate for his stated purpose. Furthermore, the theore-
tical foundations underlying the structure of class are unexplicated.
His failure to distinguish between power and authority raises logical
and utilitarian problems. Thus the theoretical foundations underlying
the structure of power are inadequate. In both the case of class and
power he 'transcends' his original definition in the process of doing
his analysis.

The normative context of his study is found to be ambiguous,
but appears to be the theory of democratic elitism. This constitutes
a major value inconsistency because this theory rejects democracy as an
end and treats it simply as a method. It is in opposition to thorough-
going democracy, whose normative ends Porter supports. Its method,
playing by the 'rules of the game', requires compromise and 'creates'

brokerage politics, which Porter dislikes. It fears and does not allow the broadening of social participation, which Porter calls for. Finally, it furnishes a context for Porter's findings which rob them of their import.

It is suggested that Porter should have treated democracy as a topic rather than as a resource. This would have allowed him to recognize the error in his rejection of liberal democracy, and would have allowed him to retain thoroughgoing democracy as a critical context with which to evaluate his findings. Furthermore, these findings would have been multiplied if he had simply used elitist democracy heuristically. Such findings and analyses, however, would have required that Porter not operate with a 'strategy of respectability.'

The essay concludes with two points, both rooted in the everyday world, and both suggested as programmatic, 'external,' answers to problems in Political Sociology.

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Introduction

The recent events in Quebec have revived interest in problems of class and power, even among social scientists. The Canadian touchstone for all such analysis is without question, The Vertical Mosaic by John Porter (1965). As one reviewer stated, "this is the sociological study of present-day Canada, and it will doubtless remain a basic reference work on Canadian social structure for some time to come" (Horowitz, I., 1966:862). That Horowitz has been correct on both counts is the raison d'être of this essay. If we are to build upon Porter's impressive beginning, it is imperative that we examine and explicate its weaknesses. While a small group of reviewers (Marshall, 1965; Longstaff, 1967; Resnick, 1968) have pointed up specific problems in The Vertical Mosaic, none of the book's reviewers have recognized its multiple conceptual, theoretical and ethical problems. It is upon these problems that this essay focuses.

Our approach consists of an 'internal' critique. That is to say, the attempt has been made to generate the critique within Porter's value system and in terms of the particular canons of science which he would recognize as applicable to his work. This leads us to posit a certain relationship between values and science based upon our own interpretation and modification of Weber's fact-value distinction (1949). We wish to clarify our approach at the outset in order to 1.) treat it as the taken for granted resource that it usually is taken to be in social science and 2.) 'bracket' the question of an 'external' critique based

upon a 'paradigm' of social science other than Porter's. The latter

point, and possibility, is extremely interesting to us, but it appears

to be more strategically sound to take the approach available and re-

cognizable to most of our colleagues. The soundness of this strategy

is suggested to us by the possibility that an internal critique will

lead to, if not call for, 'external' answers. At the Here and Now of

this writing, however, this is only a possibility. Furthermore, it is

a possibility which takes us outside of the limits of our internal

critique, and therefore will not be treated as a topic within this

essay.

Science and Values

The relationship between science and values was examined most

notably by Max Weber in his work on methodology in sociology (1949).

He held that a scholar's choice of a specific problem always has rele-

vance to value, i.e., the problem is always and essentially a part of

the body of ethical and political concerns characteristic of the his-

torical epoch in which the investigator lives. The crux of the matter,

however, is that after a problem is chosen the researcher is subject to

logical and empirical rules in analyzing the problem that are separate

from his evaluative predispositions. In theory, any research can be

critically evaluated without reference to the values of the researcher.

While we shall shortly modify Weber's fact-value distinction

in the direction of tightening the relationship between values and

science, we must concur that certain logical and empirical rules apply

normatively within the finite province of meaning of scientific theoriz-

ing. As we shall see in chapters three, four, and five, when we apply

the postulate of logical consistency to Porter's use of his concepts of

class, power and democracy, we find gross inconsistencies and a depen-

dency upon everyday and discipline -- common meanings for the accom-

plishment of coherence. In the case of each of his key concepts, when

we go beyond his 'facts' to examine the theoretical foundations and

frameworks upon which his analyses rest and depend, we find theoretical

poverty. Thus, from within the realm of science The Vertical Mosaic

will be shown to have been a surprisingly unsound enterprise.

These findings in themselves would warrant a critique; but

there is a problem which, in some sense, is above these conceptual and

theoretical problems. This follows from the fact that scientific pro-

blems have value relevance. When the problems are class and power the

relevance is especially clear. The writings of Porter indicate that

he was highly aware of the importance and relevance of values to science.

Thus it is exceedingly disappointing that the presentation and perspec-

tive of The Vertical Mosaic constitute an ethical problem of "value

consistency."

The concept of "value consistency" is a modification and ex-

tension of Weber's fact-value distinction. In light of the equilibrium

vs. conflict theory controversy over the past twenty years (Demerath

and Peterson, 1967), it is quite clear that values and facts do not

reside in separate rooms. When one enters upon facts, values are not

left behind. The choice of perspectives, concepts and theory for the

analyses of 'facts' has certain ideological features and consequences.

It must be realized, as Tom Bottomore has pointed out, that "every socio-

logical concept and theory has an ideological force by reason of its influence upon the thoughts and actions of men in their everyday life" (1964:20). Values not only lead us to problems, they are important in our choice of analytical approaches to those problems. Such choices are ethical. We do not operate from purely theoretical perspectives; we operate from ethico-theoretical perspectives.

Without taking further our analysis of the embeddedness of facts within the realm of values, we can see that we are irremediably citizens as well as scientists. As such, we not only must operate under the postulate of logical consistency within the finite province of meaning of scientific theorizing; but in operating within that province, and living the dialectic between that province and the paramount reality of the everyday world, we are also governed by a postulate of "value consistency." This holds because of the categorically imperative nature of values and value systems. In member's parlance, to violate this norm is to be hypocritical to "sell out." While this norm is not a major concern to everyday members operating under common sense rationalities, for the scientist-member value consistency is of much more concern simply because consistency itself is such a dominant value in his science-centered life.

When we examine Porter's work in The Vertical Mosaic in terms of the embeddedness of science in values, we find that not only is his use of concepts inconsistent, but his choices of concepts, theory and perspectives are inconsistent with his values. He is not only guilty of logical inconsistency, he is guilty of value inconsistency. The two are not unrelated, although it is in the nature of such relationships

to be difficult to reconstruct.

When only an impersonal manuscript is available, one must depend upon a highly anonymous system of typifications (Natanson, 1970: 12) in order to get at how a piece of scholarship might have been done. Our reconstruction of how Porter's ethical duplicity affected his conceptual and theoretical efforts is only one of many possible interpretative reconstructions. For example, the 'strategy of respectability' discussed in Chapter Two is our construct to explain his muted radicalism. It is employed because of its usefulness in making sense of the character of the book. However, that he 'changed his mind' and was no longer a socialist when he wrote The Vertical Mosaic, is another plausible interpretation. For us, this interpretation is not strongly warranted because of the uneven polemical tone of the book, but it remains as an alternative interpretation which further information may support.

In that our reconstruction suggests a relationship between values and facts, the following essay is ordered so as to make this relationship available. Thus we shall first examine the ethical problems, then, turn to the conceptual and theoretical problems, and thirdly speculate as to what the consequences of value consistency would have been for Porter's conceptual and theoretical efforts. Our findings and possibilities will be summarized in the final chapter and the possibility of 'external' answers will again be raised.

Chapter One

Porter's Value Position in 1961

A major unrecognized problem in Porter's book is ethical dup-
licity, or value inconsistency. In order to recognize the value in-
consistency of The Vertical Mosaic (hereafter referred to as The VM)
it helps to establish a bench-mark. (Porter's value position will be
examined at length, for while there is value inconsistency within
The VM, it is only when we go outside of the book and examine the other
works of this author that we can discover whether The VM is consistent
with other evidence of his value position.) Fortunately, we have Por-
ter's contribution to the volume Social Purpose for Canada (Oliver,
1961: 27-56), entitled "Power and Freedom in Canadian Democracy," where
his biases and ethical position are quite clear.[1] In this chapter we
shall document his value position.

Socialism and Democracy

"Power and Freedom in Canadian Democracy" appears to be written
by a morally concerned 'left-wing social democrat,' which is appropriate
for the book in which the essay appears.[2] The author is a socialist con-
cerned with the failures and shortcomings of the history of socialist
parties and socialist theory. His answer, however, is not proletarian
revolution and dictatorship. He opts to play by the rules of the game
in order to get control of the political system. "Control of the poli-
tical system," however, must be democratic and must lead to a thorough-
going democratic society, which is the Good Society, par excellence.

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Porter's contribution, which appears in the opening section entitled "Moral Issues," is thus as a socialist devoted to democracy. As befits the title of the edited volume in which this essay appears (Oliver, 1961), Porter seeks to clarify the 'social purpose for Canada.'

For our purposes of establishing his 1961 essay as a benchmark for comparison, we shall select and highlight certain relevant features of this essay. The relevancy of these features will become clear in the following chapters.

In 1961 Porter's concepts, vocabulary and perspective were socialist. Classes were referred to as real social groups existing in society. He focused on the working class and historical changes in the relations to the means of production. His discussion of the latter lead him to write of the "white collar 'salariat'" (1961:40) as he examined the "modern social structure based on industry" (1961:41).

The feature of the superstructure which bothered him the most was that creative behaviour, which would be the identifying characteristic of the citizenry of thorough-going Canadian democracy, is presently a class privilege.

> Such behaviour continues to be a class privilege because those who engage in it are educated, or have inherited a way of life which is essential to its realization, or they occupy commanding positions in our institutional systems - economic, religious, educational, and so forth. Since our institutional elites are predominantly recruited from the higher segments of our class structure, our social and cultural values tend to be defined in class terms. (1961:34)

This "monopolization of a society's creative potential" (1961:34) is the newest and clearest reflection of the fact that "Capitalism has not lost its exploitative character" (1961:33).

Porter thus located the enemy in the economic system and left
no question that the corporate elite are in a dominant position in
Canadian society because of the structural dynamics of corporate capi-
talism. Their dominance affects all spheres of society. In a sentence,
reminding one of C. Wright Mills' (1956) outrage at the "higher immora-
lity" of elites, Porter emphatically stated that "The exploitive, pre-
datory and restrictive character of capitalist institutions rests on
a morality defined by those at the apex of our institutional hierarchies."
Thus we have upper "class control of total social morality" (1961:38).

One of Porter's solutions to these problems is the mainstay
of the NDP position: "What we need in positions of power in a democra-
tically planned society is a changed quality of leadership" (1961:50).
This leadership must be imbued with a dedication to public service rather
than private gain. Such leadership is not only needed in "government"
bureaucracies. As a socialist, Porter recognized that government bureau-
cracies are not the only ones which should be planned and controlled demo-
cratically. "Politics" is not limited to the institutions of govern-
ment: "despots" are found outside of the civil service. "Corporate
'despotism' can be much more far-reaching, as, for example, when it
holds the future of a community in its hands by deciding to move its
operations from one city to another" (1961:41). Porter's definition
and discussion of power (1961:27-29) argued that hierarchy is an essen-
tial feature of any society, especially modern industrial society.
The alternative is that all elites, in all spheres which impinge on our
lives, must be elected democratically.

A new quality of leadership, democratically elected in all spheres, was not Porter's only, or even his most important, solution to the problem of the Good Life. The Good Life is the one also envisioned by classical, liberal democratic theorists such as J.S. Mill, a life marked by creativity and spontaneity as well as rationality and humanitarianism. The latter two characteristics of democratic man were treated by Mill and among others, Green, at the level of an ontology concerning the nature of man.[3] Porter however treated these two characteristics as a goal to be attained within the Good Society: "It is possible to create a society in which the prevailing personality is marked by humanitarianism and rationality, and while such a goal may be far-distant, it is the goal we must keep in mind" (1961:51).

The fine mesh between Porter's socialism and the normative ends of classical democracy was such that the latter are called for under the former's name, and socialism was seen as dependent upon democracy for its implementation.

> Socialist policy...must be directed towards releasing the spontaneous and creative forces within human society. Such a change can only be brought about through democratic planning and co-ordination (1961:38).

Democratic planning, within socialism, however, is not limited to the "political" sphere as in capitalist liberal democracies. Nor does it simply involve electing all major elites. Democracy must be thorough-going. Democratic planning requires participation by all those affected by the decisions to be made. The elite-mass structure will exist because hierarchy will still exist, but that hierarchy will be negotiable and thoroughly democratic.

Porter found it intolerable that "social goals are now established by a much smaller number than in the days of entrepreneurial capitalism....the vast majority in our mass democracies do not participate in any kind of creative behaviour" (1961:34). He was cognizant, however, of the obstacle which the "widespread apathy in our western industrial societies" (1961:54) sets up against the development of thorough-going democracy. Thus the development of techniques which will overcome apathy are a necessity for socialists, because "In a democratically planned society there must be a desire for participation in the establishment of social goals" (1961:54). Unfortunately, socialists have not found such techniques. Worse yet, "Socialists have never given enough attention to how social participation in the definition and achievement of goals can be brought about" (1961:39).

Porter saw the solution to the problem of participation as necessarily being in the direction of affecting its cause: the pervading sense of powerlessness and isolation. His answer was decentralization.

> A massive homogeneous national culture can only intensify that
> sense of isolation and powerlessness of which we have spoken.
> Democratic social planning must preserve and foster group dif-
> ferences, because it is through identification with small rather
> than massive social aggregates that the individual can avoid
> the feeling of isolation. (1961:35)

In line with this position, he stated that "the French desire for cultural separation can be justified both psychologically and socially" (1961:35).

In the last few pages he returned to the problem of participation, this time in terms of the democratic control of industry, and

concludes that "since large productive units do not lend themselves well to worker participation, planning must result in decentralization" (1961: 54) then, approvingly, he reminded us that "Decentralization furthermore helps to strengthen regional, cultural and sometimes ethnic differences" (1961:54).

Thus, to the question of the social purpose for Canada...

The answer surely lies in the desirability of social participation in defining and achieving goals, in the release of the potential for a creative life shared with others, governed not through competitiveness but through co-operation" (1961:35).

The realization of these ends requires a new quality of leadership, thorough-going democratic planning and decentralization, all of which are to accomplished within and through the political system.[4]

Footnotes

1. This work is chosen on the assumption that the most explicit statements of value position, especially when they express a controversial viewpoint, can be most safely taken as real/true/honest. Furthermore, his 1961 value position surfaces elsewhere in his work (1968) and in The VM itself. Other commentators have also remarked on his strong moral concerns (Horowitz, I., 1966; Horowitz, G., 1965; Wolf, C.P., 1970). Finally, if his 1961 position is not honest, then, without comparing that position to The VM, we can pronounce him intellectually dishonest and value inconsistent.

2. Social Purpose for Canada was to be for the NDP what Social Planning for Canada in 1935 was for the CCF: a statement of diagnoses and remedies for Canadian society which would be acted upon, at least in spirit, by the new political parties. The former book, however, is much less directly an NDP product than the latter was a CCF product. See Oliver (1961:v-vii).

3. On the two ontologies of man which pervade Western culture see C.B. Macpherson (1967).

4. Unfortunately, this vision is never linked to the realities of corporate capitalism in such a way that we can understand how we are to move from the latter to the former. The problem of how we are to be successful in destroying a class system by working within the very political system which has allowed that class system to be maintained, is never addressed. As we shall see, this problem haunts the conclusions to be drawn from The Vertical Mosaic - conclusions which Porter never drew.

Chapter Two

Porter's Value Position in 1965

When we turn to examine Porter's value position in The VM,
we find a strange but not uncommon phenomenon. Gad Horowitz explains

it in terms of Porter's frustration at the decay of socialist theory

since the Second World War and the realization that the means to the

socialist ends" - nationalization and central planning - have been tried

and found wanting" (1965:14).

> Porter the socialist therefore retreats a few steps to more
> solid ground and assumes the role of Porter the sociologist.
> Pointing out that our socialist and labour elites have 'muted'
> their radicalism in accepting the framework of corporate capi-
> talism, he mutes his own radicalism. (1965:14)

Horowitz displays an ignorance of Porter's 1961 essay. Porter noted the

decay of theory and the shortcomings of the means, but he saw ways out

of these problems. Horowitz has nevertheless hit upon the peculiar

flavor of The VM: 'muted' radicalism. In this chapter we shall try to

bring to the fore the background strategy of respectability which mutes

Porter's radicalism.

The Strategy of Respectability

In the "Foreword" of The VM John Meisel tells us that Porter's

study is of extraordinary importance not only because it deals with and

provides information on class and status; "but also because it departs

from a longstanding tradition in Canadian academic circles concerning

the degree to which a scholarly work can be simultaneously respectable

and polemical" (1965:x). Porter's muted radicalism can be understood as an attempt to be both left and right, "simultaneously respectable and polemical."

Porter footnotes Mills' The Power Elite in The VM and writes of meeting him in Toronto where they both read papers at a colloquim (1970:161). He was undoubtedly familiar with the controversy that Mills' book generated and very much aware that his book would receive a similar reception. The book was compared to Mills', but favorably. Irving Horowitz, in a glib, ill-informed review, tells the reader that Porter "discusses the Canadian political elite in Millsian terms, without falling prey to the assumptions of coordinated policy-making found in The Power Elite (1966:862)." Martin Robin, however, read the book a bit differently, and held that "Being a Canadian, Professor Porter is not given to the florid phraseology of the moral crusader, nor does he write with the massive indignation of his American equivalent, C. Wright Mills" (1966:154). That Horowitz finds a "Millsian" discussion and discovers Porter's "socialist consciousness" (1966:863), while Robin finds Porter to be an All-Canadian boy whose prose is "somewhat restrained" (1966: 154), can be understood as a consequence of Porter's attempt to be both respectable and polemical.

Porter's background strategy of respectability is manifest in four minor and one major tactic. The four minor tactics are rhetoric, safe concepts, unanswered questions, and undrawn conclusions. These tactics give The VM a muted polemical tone while assuring its respectability. The major tactic is the assumption of a respectable theoretical perspective which leads the reader, and apparently the author, to over-

look the radical implications of the book's findings.

Tactic I

The minor tactic which accounts for the disparity between I.

Horowitz' and Robin's readings of The VM is rhetoric. Porter's rhetoric

is that of a social democrat. This position and the rhetoric appro-

priate to it, surfaces in Porter's Preface and in three out of the seven-

teen chapters: Chapter One: "Class and Power;" Chapter Six: "Social

Class and Educational Opportunity;" and Chapter Twelve: "The Canadian

Political System." In the Preface he is quite explicit:

> I attach great importance to equality of opportunity on both
> ethical and practical grounds...I believe strongly, too, in
> the creative role of politics, and in the importance of poli-
> tical institutions as the means through which the major goals
> of society can be achieved. (1965:xii)

While this is part of the social democrat's position,[1] it is also a

position acceptable to liberals (in the common American sense of the

term). Thus what appears of his 1961 position is that part which is

the most respectable (democratic control of industry, for example, is

never mentioned). While his discussions in the sixth and twelfth chap-

ters are more polemical than might be acceptable to liberals, the fact

that polemics occur en masse in only two chapters after the introduction,[2]

and that the rest of the book is 'dry sociology;' provides a situation

where Horowitz can be taken with the few polemical chapters and thus

discover "socialist consciousness," while Robin can attend to the book

in general and comment that the prose is "somewhat restrained."

Tactic II

The second tactic, <u>safe concepts</u>, will be dealt with at length
in the chapters dealing with class, power and democracy, but the argu-
ment that Porter's concepts are "safe" can be sketched here. First
of all, Porter's rationale for choosing his concepts was safe and res-
pectable. In his "Research Biography" he stated that "my task was
analytical and descriptive, and it was therefore prudent to use those
general structural categories, such as stratification and kinship, most
widely employed in sociology and anthropology" (1970:157). The appro-
priateness of his concepts, in terms of both their adequacy for what he
wanted to examine, and their normative consistency with his own value
position, apparently was not at issue for him. Presumably, had Marxist
categories been "most widely employed in sociology and anthropology,"
he would have used them.

Porter defines classes as self-conscious social groups. Even
though Marx held class consciousness to be a necessary condition for
the existence of class, this formulation is still "safe." With this
formulation of class there exists the highest probability that the
conclusion will be drawn that the democratic society being studied does
not have 'classes,' which is good news to all 'protectors' of that
society. Porter, however, has no data on class consciousness, so he
takes the other extreme, safe, position, and defines class so narrowly
that it looses all its politically-charged meaning. Thus when the
work 'class' is used "we are talking about artificial statistical groups
which do not have any life of their own or any coherence" (1965:11).

His definition of class is a considerable retreat from, and denial of,
his 1961 position where he treated classes as real groups in the social
structure and wrote of class privilege, class control and social and
cultural values defined in class terms.

His concept of power is the same one he used in 1961, but when
it is examined, as it will be in Chapter Four, it becomes clear that
his concept is inadequate for his theoretical needs and is inconsistent
with his values. For Porter, "Power is the right that some people have
to direct the affairs of others" (1961:27). This rather curious defini-
tion identifies as 'power' what others would call legitimate authority.
In this formulation all 'power' is legitimate. This formulation appears
as contradictory to Porter's value position, for it rules out legitimacy
as a problem in itself. Thus the question of values underlying and
embodied by corporate capitalism cannot be addressed. The process
of delegitimation, which is central to institutional change, and even
to elite circulation, cannot even be dealt with. Furthermore, the
fact that legitimacy is recognized as a problem by politicians and is
sometimes central to elite disputes, means that certain analyses Porter
attempts within this concept of power will be inadequate.

The safety of Porter's concept of democracy is a bit more dif-
ficult to address because Porter has concepts of democracy. He never
explicitly states and operates with one concept and theory of democracy.
Chapter Five will deal more extensively with the confusion on this
point, but for now it can be said that he implicitly operates with,
and within, the theory of democratic elitism as formulated and used by
Schumpeter (1950), Lipset (1960), and Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee

(1954), among others. This theory of democracy explicitly drops the normative ends central to classical democratic theory: realization of full human potential via the Good Society created by all citizens via democratic methods. This theory is completely at odds with the thorough-going democracy called for by Porter in 1961. As with 'class' and 'power,' 'democracy' in The VM is 'respectable.'

Tactic III

The third tactic consists of unanswered questions. Controversial questions are raised in a number of places in the book, but they are never explicitly answered, although data and discussions are provided which seemingly serve to answer the questions. The questions revolve around the nature of the power structure. In his discussion of Marxian theory in Chapter One he argues that "what we have instead of a class of capitalists is a smaller and probably more cohesive group – an elite within the private sector of the economy" (1965:23). On the next page he declares that:

> If it is true that the corporate elite is a relatively smaller and more coherent group than the nineteenth-century bourgoisie, does its power extend beyond the economy? The answer can come only after empirical investigation. (1965:24)[3]

The empirical investigation is provided, but the meaning/consequence of the implicit answer, for the configuration of power, is never addressed.

Within Chapter Seven, Porter discusses Raymond Aron's extreme-type, continuum classification system. At one end we have the "soviet" model consisting of total organization and power in the hands of an integrated, monolithic power structure. In the "western" model, however, we have a plurality of competing elites who are only situationally dominant,

tend toward an equilibrium of power, and are thus non-unified. Porter

draws the section on "Degree of Co-ordination Among Elites" to a close

by stating that:

> There are two questions which empirical investigation can help
> to answer. One is the extent to which any one society has moved
> towards either end of the continuum. The second is the relative
> power of the various elite groups in any one society at any
> particular period. (1965:215)[4]

How The VM answers these questions, and what the answers are, is con-

fusing and uncertain.

After discussing "Economic Elite and Social Structure" he con-

cludes Chapter Nine with the following paragraph:

> In the general scheme of elite groups which forms the framework
> for this study it was pointed out that elites compete for power
> with each other. Which of them was dominant, or whether they
> merged into a power elite, was a question for empirical investi-
> gation. We might be in a position to answer these questions
> after looking in the following chapters, at some of the other
> elites. (1965:308)

Up until the final chapter, empirical investigation seems to

suggest strongly that the corporate elite are the most powerful. In

Chapter Fifteen extensive data is presented to support the position that

the large daily newspapers are "instruments of an established upper

class" (1965:463),[5] as are media in general. In terms of organized phil-

anthropy:

> ...in no Canadian city would these large campaigns be successful
> without the support of the leading businessmen of the community.
> Not only do they supply funds, but they also recruit personnel,
> particularly their younger executives, to help in organization.
> (1965:302)

Of course, the corporate elite are also quite well represented on boards

of institutions of higher learning. In general, "Success of cultural

enterprise is linked to corporate decision-making. Thus in the creation

of a cultural social product, there is an extension of power far be-
yond the economic system" (1965:301).

More significantly for relations between elites, we find that
the corporate elite have, and are involved in, powerful voluntary associa-
tions such as the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and the Canadian Manu-
facturers' Association. Regarding voluntary associations, Porter states
that "leading positions within them constitute for the corporate elite
an extension of power" (1965:299). The corporate elite's 'power' or
influence[6] is also evident and extended in the ideology of capitalist
free enterprise which sanctifies the corporate elite, while serving to
vilify any other elite which attempts to usurp corporate perogatives
or trespass on corporate domain. Porter states that:

> The fact that the corporate elite hold important positions
> beyond the corporate world means that they are in a position
> to make their ideology pervade the entire society until it
> becomes identified with the common good. (1965:305)

The thesis of corporate dominance is given further indirect
support by Porter's presentation of the political elite's impotence.
He rails against the conservative tone of brokerage politics, bemoans
the lack of a Left-Right axis and condemns the opportunism of the two
major parties (1965:366-416). The fact which is most damaging to the
credibility of any counter-thesis of political elite dominance is that
upper class citizens do not feel it necessary or advantageous to enter
politics: the privileges enjoyed by the upper class are not threatened
by the middle class holders of political power (1965:344-5).

The answers to the questions raised on pages 24, 215 and 308
seem clear. The build-up to the final chapter on elite relations points

quite distinctly to the corporate elite as predominant. The respectable

theory of pluralism, which has it that power is equally shared and dif-

fused throughout society, appears, subsequent to empirical investiga-

tion, to be a descriptively inaccurate ideology. Yet in the all-impor-

tant final chapter we find that in almost every example of elite con-

flict and coalition, the political elite either wins or emerges unscathed.

Only once do they lose but then it is to the public (1965:544). In

three important cases (CNR, BCE, and A.V. Roe) they defeated the corpor-

ate elite. How it is that the compromising, impotent political elite

are so 'powerful' is never dealt with.

In the end the question of which elite is dominant is not only

left hanging, it is left confused. The structure of power appears as

"free form," which allows one reviewer (Horowitz, I., 1966:863) to see

the structure of power among elites as "horizontal," and another to re-

port that "the economic elite is the predominant group within the rul-

ing class" (Robin, 1966:154). Again, one can focus on one part, such

as the final chapter and discover respectable findings, or focus on

other parts and discover radical findings.[7] Given the length of the

text, 558 pages, and the general organization of all scholarly work,

it is the final chapter which we would expect to the carry the most

weight in the decision as to whether a book is radical or 'respectable.'

In the end, the important question, 'What is the structure of power

in Canada?' is left unanswered. Confusion reigns, with the result be-

ing that respectable pluralism seems to prevail.

Tactic IV

The fourth tactic, undrawn conclusions, is related to the third, but of a different order. The tactic involves not drawing out the radical implications of particular findings. Loose ends are left lying, thus respectability is a lie. These 'loose ends' will be tied up in the following chapters, but at this point we can provide one surprisingly overlooked example. Porter attaches great importance to equality of opportunity, thus he is greatly upset that education is class determined and that Canada has relied upon educated immigrants to do the white collar technical jobs that Canadians should be educated to do.

The obvious, but unsettling, conclusion to be drawn is that inequality of educational opportunity in Canada is maintained by multinational corporations and an upper class who find it more expedient and inexpensive to import educated labour rather than shoulder any of the tax burden which educating Canadians would require. The consequence of not drawing this conclusion is to present a situation which appears to be the fault of no one, and whose solution appears to be the responsibility of everyone. "Equality of blame and responsibility" perpetuates the myth of equality of power and obscures the realities of class interests and Canada's satellite status viz. the U.S.

Tactic V

The major tactic employed is the utilization of two, complementary, respectable ethico-theoretical perspectives in the doing of

The VM: elitism and functionalism. Given Porter's treatment of classes
as real social groups in his 1961 essay, and given his socialist demo-
crat position, one would expect his analysis of Canada's power structure
to be a class analysis. It is, in a very inconsistent and unsupported
manner (see Chapter Three), but the main perspective he operates from
is that of elite analysis.[8]

In terms of value consistency, it is most surprising that
Porter did his analysis from an elitist perspective. In an interesting
and revealing reconstruction of how The VM was done, Porter (1970)
wrote of being intrigued with Aron's (1950) attempt to synthesize some
of the ideas of Pareto and Marx: "I decided, by adding some Mosca and
Weber to elaborate Aron's Pareto-Marx synthesis into a scheme for the
study of power in Canada" (1970:159). Mosca and Pareto, as James Meisel
has pointed out, are counter-revolutionary theorists, "both are fighting
on two fronts: against democracy and (Marxist) socialism - which, to
them, are one and the same thing" (1965:3). Their values, their ethico-
theoretical perspective, contradict Porter's social democratic values.[9]
The contradictions are not averted by synthesizing Marx and Pareto, for
Aron's position holds that minority rule, whether by a governing elite
or a ruling class is inevitable, no matter what form of government is
utilized. Within this view, the extension of democracy, i.e.,
increased social participation by the masses, is seen as a naive and
unattainable goal. Theorists of this ilk have made extensive use of
the studies which show the masses to be highly authoritarian and lack-
ing democratic values. Bottomore has shown that elite theory is compa-
tible with only an adumbrated theory of democracy (1964:112-217). As

we shall see in Chapter Five, the theory of democratic elitism, which
is part of the baggage of Porter's elite analysis, is irreconcilable
with the central requirements of Porter's thorough-going democracy.

In doing The VM Porter stated that he had adopted "a simple
functionalist view that each of the subsystems contributed to the whole,
that they were dynamically interrelated and that there should be a
degree of intergration between them" (1970:158). This view complements
the elitist perspective because both operate in terms of separate but
related/intergrated subsystems, e.g., the polity, the economy, religion.
Porter does not carry through with the functionalist approach to the
point of adopting a functionalist view of classes.[10] His treatment of
classes as simply "artificial statistical groups" (1965:11) has the
effect of defining away class and thus making his attempt to use Aron's
Marx-Pareto synthesis turn out to be lopsided in favor of Paretian elite
analysis. Functionalism provides a way to link and explain social dif-
ferentiation and political hierarchy, but Porter "decided to be eclectic"
(1970:158) and chose to be a "simple" functionalist. Porter's is a
liberal rather than conservative respectability.

The liberal respectability which 'simple' functionalism pro-
vides, however, conflicts at two points with Porter's 1961 value posi-
tion. The "functionalist" framework which Porter adopts has him defin-
ing as "political" elites those holding certain high positions in the
government. This is, of course, a standard, classical liberal way of
cutting up the world. However, from a thorough-going democratic point
of view, the classical liberal separation of state and society is anathema.

In "Power and Freedom in Canadian Democracy" Porter speaks of
"corporate 'despotism'" and reveals how corporate "organizations impinge
on our lives in myriads of ways" (1961:41). He pointed out that elites
have a monopoly on creative behaviour (1961:34) and that it is only
through the extension of social participation that this monopoly can be
broken and the ends of democracy reached. Such a position necessarily
treats "any persistent pattern of human relationships that involves,
to a significant extent, power, rule, or authority" (Dahl, 1963:6)
as political relationships. This concept of political is at the very
core of thorough-going democratic theory. To operate with the narrow,
"structural" definition of political, as having solely to do with govern-
ment, is to obscure and avoid the crucial question of the accountability
of all major elites to the masses in a thorough-going democracy.

The second point of conflict is the unit of reference of func-
tionalism. Porter's "simple functionalist view that each of the sub-
systems contributed to the whole" reveals a fundamental contradiction.
What is functional or dysfunctional from the functionalist perspective
is determined with reference "to the whole," to society, whereas the
unit of reference for classical, and especially thorough-going demo-
cracy, is the individual. The "shift in emphasis from the needs and
potentialities of the individual citizen to the requirements of the sys-
tem" (Duncan and Lukes, 1967:175), which characterizes the elitist
theory of democracy, means that not only is functionalism congenial to
elitism but it is completely amenable to elitism's companion, elitist
democracy.

Thus in choosing to operate from an elitist and functionalist theoretical perspective, Porter has assured himself of liberal respectability for The VM, but in so doing he has compromised his thoroughgoing democratic values. Had he developed a solidly based class analysis and took notice of conflict theory, especially Dahrendorf's postulate that "Every society rests on constraint of some of its members by others" (1964:103), he would have been value-consistent and have made some important discoveries, as will be shown.

Of course, the adoption of a value-consistent ethico-theoretical perspective is, in itself, no quarantee that these discoveries would have been revealed. As we have attempted to demonstrate, Porter seemed to be operating with a "strategy of respectability" in doing The VM. As we now turn to the conceptual and theoretical problems in The VM it will become clear that Porter has paid a price for his respectability: in the doing of his analysis he found it necessary to transcend his safe concepts and ends up within a theoretical context where his findings are not only unsurprising, but expected and applauded.

Footnotes

1. This would be a right wing social democrat's view. A left wing social democrat would argue for an equalizing (not an equality) of condition, rather than simply equality of opportunity. In his 1961 essay, Porter seemed nearer to the left wing view as he mentioned the "socialist principle of economic equality" (1961:30). However, his mention of this principle was in an historical discussion of socialism, thus his position in 1961 as a left, right, or middle "wing" social democrat, in terms of this issue, was not clear. His condemnation of capitalism certainly suggests a left of center position, though.

2. The introductory first chapter, because it is important to the tactic of unanswered questions, will be dealt with later on.

3. Logically, Porter cannot ask the question "...does its power extend beyond the economy?" because, for him, "Power means the recognized right to make effective decisions on behalf of a group of people" (1965:201). As will be clear in Chapter Four, "recognized rights" are legal, institutional rights. Thus, by definition, the corporate elite's 'power' is limited to its institutional realm, the economy.

4. Given Porter's definition of power (see Chapter Four, below), the answer to the second question can only be in terms of the configuration of rights codified in law, which is neither the answer nor question that the reader, or most social theorists, are interested in.

5. The relation between class and power (elites) is highly problematic in _The VM_ because of conceptual inconsistencies and theoretical weaknesses. (See Chapter Three, below.) Thus, the discussion of elite relations and relative power are never firmly grounded in a class analysis. Porter's atheoretical stance (1970:157) leads him away from discussing how control of major newspapers by an "establish- ed upper class" is to be understood as evidence for the dominance of the corporate elite. While his classes have "their origin in economic processes and economic differences" (1965:28), the cor- porate elite is seen as _just another elite_ and not as _the_ elite central to, and responsible for, the class system. Porter, there- fore asks 'which elite is dominant?' rather than 'how does the upper class rule?'

6. Porter feels that it would be more appropriate to consider honorific roles held by corporate elite to _lead_ to increased influence rather than power (1965:299). Unfortunately, "influence" is never defined, although it seems rather central to any complete discussion of elite relations.

7. However, in the case of the two reviewers cited, perception isn't selective. I. Horowitz found Millsian rhetoric but respectiable conclusions, whereas Robin found restrained prose presenting radical conclusions.

8. Thus, Gad Horowitz' statement that Porter the socialist "retreats a few steps to more solid ground and assumes the role of Porter the sociologist" (1965:14), displays an ignorance of the possible pers- pectives available from that "more solid ground."

9. Porter's desire for <u>thorough-going</u> democracy puts him closer to the Marxist socialists than to social democrats, and therefore makes his adoption of the elite perspective all the more confounding.

10. He correctly views "functional inequality" as a conservative ideology (1965:15).

Chapter Three

The 'Synthetic' Structure of Class

In The Vertical Mosaic Porter places the constitutive accent
on class consciousness as the necessary and sufficient condition for
the existence of 'real' classes. He defines classes as social groups
within which "the members have a sense of identity with one another,
share common values and traditions, and have an awareness of unity and
common purpose" (1965:10). Rather than taking the position that classes
do exist in Canada, as he clearly did in his 1961 essay, Porter states
that no nation-wide data is available on the all-important subjective
dimension of class: class consciousness. Instead, he proposes to
deal with 'class' objectively. Thus when the word 'class' is used "we
are talking about artificial statistical groups which do not have any
life of their own or any coherence" (1965:11).

In organizing his class system he utilizes a simple gradation
approach (cf. Ossowski: 1963:42). With this approach three or more
classes are vertically ordered, not in terms of relations of dependence,
but simply in terms of some objectively measurable characteristic.
Porter uses income gradations to order his classes. Occasionally, how-
ever, he makes use of Blishen's (1958) synthetic gradation scheme of
occupational classes. In that occupations are attributes (cf. Gross:
1949) they cannot be ordered along a simple continuum, and therefore
the order of occupations was established by synthesizing continuums
of the occupation related variables, of income and education. Blishen
took the average income and average number of years of schooling for

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each occupation, and computed standard scores for each variable. The synthesis took place when "these two standard scores were...combined and each occupation ranked according to this combined score" (Blishen, 1958: 522). For both the simple and synthetic gradation schemes, the setting of class boundaries is arbitrary.

One of the first problems we encounter has to do with a basic requirement of any stratification analysis (Gross, 1949: 41)). Although Porter speaks of the "structure of class" (1965: 29), "the class system" (1965: 28), and sometimes employs Blishen's seven occupational classes; he never settles on <u>how many</u> classes are in <u>his</u> system. He mentions "middle and upper classes" (1965: 291), the "classes below" these (1965: 283), the "lower class" (1965: 195), the "working class" (1965: 344) (functional group!), and the "bottom class" (1965: 154), but never explicitly states whether there are 3, 4, or 5 classes. Of course, to have done so would have led to the stickly problem of drawing class boundaries. He only confronts this problem once, when he draws the line at $8,000 income per year (1965: 132) as the boundary between the middle class and the "classes below." It is at this point when a second, and much more important problem arises.

When he draws this boundary it becomes clear that his "class system" is not one of simple gradation but rather is a peculiar case of 'synthetic' gradation. Rather than organizing his class system statistically in terms of modal points around which incomes are found to cluster, e.g., defining the middle class in terms of a "middle majority", he goes 'outside' his supposed 'simple gradation' scheme and employs an external, unexplicated, subjective criteria to internally organize

his class system. Unlike Blishen (1958), Porter never states his relevance criteria for the selection of class variables, nor how he has synthesized these variables. He does not define middle class statistically in terms of a "middle majority". Instead, he defines the "real middle class" (1965: 126) in terms of the variables of life style and values: "the middle class style of life does not rest on the ownership of gadgetry, but rather on the consumption of a different set of values." These values are health services, cultural enrichment and leisure. Thus, "it is the ability to consume these things...which identifies the real middle class." In that it took an $8,000 per year income, or over, to live this life during the late fifties, he drew the boundary between the middle and lower classes at this income level. Porter's objective, statistical class system is thus subjectively organized in terms of what he takes classes to 'really' be.

What classes 'really' are constitutes the major shift and inconsistency in Porter's discussion and analysis of class. By defining the "real middle class" in terms of a certain type of life style and value consumption pattern, he has switched the constitutive accent from class consciousness to social isolation as the necessary and sufficient condition for the existence of "real" classes.

Originally, social isolation had been a necessary, but not sufficient condition. Within Porter's definition of classes as social groups, the component that members "share common values and traditions" (1965: 10) refers to what Ossowski (1963: 135-6) has called one of the four possible, fundamental characteristics of stratification systems: social isolation.[1] While shared values and traditions can be seen as

necessary for the development of "a sense of identity...and...aware-
ness of unity and common purpose," the mere existence of shared values
and traditions does not guarantee the existence of class consciousness.
Therefore, social isolation is a necessary but not sufficient condition
for the existence of real social groups, i.e., classes. By examining
the concept of social isolation it will become clear that in making
the distinction between "real middle class" and "middle majority"
Porter takes the contrary position that social isolation is a neces-
sary and sufficient condition for the existence of real classes.

Social isolation is a generic concept having to do, in general,
with social distance between members of different classes and, con-
versely, with contact between members of the same class. It is most
often treated as a consequence of economic factors, e.g., division of
labor, income differences, relation to the means of production, etc.
This behavioural criterion of class divisions takes many forms. The
most explicit form is emphasized by a number of theorists (Baltzell,
1958: 59; Sweezy, 1959: 124; Kahl, 1957: 12; Schumpeter, 1953:77)
who define class in terms of kinship and friendship networks. In this
case a class is "the largest group of people whose members have inti-
mate access to one another" (Davis, et. al., 1941: 59). Dahl's (1961:
229) definition of equal "social standing" emphasizes the "intimate
access" aspect of social isolation, but goes further to suggest the
aspect of shared life style, i.e., members display a "willingness to
dine together...to accept membership in the same clubs..." The life
style aspect of the social isolation characteristic is directly re-

flected in two of the indices used in assessing class standing in the
Yankee City studies (Warner, 1963: 25-34): type of residence and resi-
dential area. Finally, Veblen's (1934) emphasis upon "conspicuous con-
sumption" reflects the aspect of life style as well as the related
dimensions of consumption patterns and values.

Porter's assertion that the "real middle class" has a recogniz-
able life style and can be identified by its consumption of a certain
set of values is thus a negation and contradiction of his original de-
finition of class. He has shifted the constitutive accent from class
consciousness to social isolation as the necessary and sufficient
condition for the existence of "real" classes.

Problems of 'Synthesis', Adequacy and Consistency

The 'latent', but most important function of distinguishing
between the "real middle class" and the statistical "middle majority"
was that it allows Porter to more closely and concretely link class
and power than could be done using "artifical statistical groups."
Whenever he shows the relationship between class and power, he falls
back on this distinction and locates the elites within "real" classes.
This is especially the case with the political, intellectual and bureau-
cratic elites, for they are mostly from the "real" middle class (1965:
395, 502, 445).

His analysis of the class background of the economic elite
is especially revealing. In examining the backgrounds of 611 directors
he found at least

197 persons who could with a variety of criteria be shown to
have had a middle class social origin. The criteria used here
included the father's occupation (for example, doctor, lawyer,
clergyman, army officer, managerial) and where the father's
occupation could not be established those with university edu-
cation were included. (1965: 292)

First of all, he has decided to treat the life style and value consump-
tion-related variable of education as a sufficient condition for mem-
bership in a certain class. Second, and more important, when we exam-
ine his examples of middle class occupations we discover that not only
has he 'synthesized' his own class system, but he has taken Blishen's
seven occupational classes and 'synthesized' them. These occupations
fall within Blishen's top two occupational classes. They are only
"middle class" in terms of Porter's shifted definition of the "real
middle class". They are not middle class in the sense of a statistical
middle majority, for they compose the top eleven percent of the labor
force (1965: 163).

How Porter has synthesized the variables of life style, value
consumption, and the attribute of occupation is completely unexplicated.
Furthermore, his 'synthesis' is incomplete: if doctors and lawyers are
middle class occupations, and at the same time are listed in Blishen's
top occupational class, what constitutes an upper class occupation?
Finally, his declaration that classes constructed in terms of occupa-
tions "are no more than statistical strata" (1965: 161) seems incon-
sistent with his use of Blishen's occupational scale in linking
class and power. The result of the distinction between the "real mid-
dle class" and the statistical "middle majority" is that the structure
of class and the links between class and power are entirely 'synthetic.'

The manifest purpose of making this distinction was to bring
into question our "widespread social image of middle classness" (1965:
125). Having made this distinction, he then argues that 90 percent
of the population are in the 'lower classes' because only 10 percent,
or so, had incomes ($8,000+) which would allow them a middle class
life style (1965: 132). What he has done, however, is to violate what
Schutz (1964: 19) has called the postulates of adequacy and consis-
tency. In defining what the middle class "really" is, he does not con-
sult any actors in the everyday world to see what they take the middle
class to "really" be. Given his stated purpose, such a consultation
or sampling, is necessary to determine if his "typical construction
would be reasonable and understandable for the actor himself as well
as for his fellow-man" (Schutz, 1964: 19). This violation of the pos-
tulate of adequacy leads to the situation where, if members define
middle classness differently, e.g., in terms of the ownership of
gadgetry rather than the consumption of certain values, Porter's ana-
lysis, discussion and conclusion are irrelevant to his purpose. If
gadgetry ownership is the prime criteria in members' minds for mid-
dle classness, which seems highly likely, then Porter's (1965: 131)
finding that "such gadgetry gets distributed in some proportion in all
income classes," e.g., "more than 80 percent had electric washers,
telephones and television sets; and 75 percent had automobiles and
vacuum cleaners" (1965: 130), can be taken as evidence to support the
Canadian social image of middle classness.

Besides violating the postulate of consistency (Schutz, 1964:
19) by shifting the meaning of class in making this distinction, he

violates it by shifting his _use_ of the term class. In Chapter One
(1965: 11) he had said that no data was available on the subjective
side of class and therefore he would use the term class in the sense
of "artificial statistical groups." However, his actual use of the
term in attempting to link class and power necessarily implies that
it is a "real" entity, "real" defined in terms of his shifted meaning
of class. This shift in use is apparent in the statement: "The majority
of Canadian political leaders have been drawn from the middle class"
(1965: 395), _not_ from the middle majority.

His use of class at a number of points reflects these shifts.
He writes of "sociological and psychological elements" of "social class
position" (1965: 183) which "help preserve the various social milieus
of class" (1965: 193). A non-awareness of the different milieux of
classes makes for a "class determined education system" (1965: 172)
which affects mobility. Important to mobility is the university
where members of the lower class (classes?) learn the "appropriate
modes of behavior" (1965: 283) to enable them to succeed in the "mid-
dle class occupational world" (1965: 284). When discussing elites,
he discovers, that in effect, the large daily newspapers are "instru-
ments of an established upper class" (1965: 463) (which suggests the
existence of class consciousness and class interests, at least among
the upper class). And in the process of examining the "class back-
ground" (1965: 483) of elites he discovers the existence and interde-
pendence of "class institutions" and "class continuity" (1965: 285).

All of these ways of talking about class and class-related
phenomena can only be understood if we do not attempt to operate in

terms of classes as artificial statistical groups lacking coherence
and unity. If one is operating with the notion of classes as socially
isolated groups, then these ways of talking make sense. But since
Porter says he won't deal with real social groups, because data are un-
available on class consciousness, the only way his analysis of class
is understandable is 1.) if we accept the distinction between middle
class and middle majority, and the accompanying, unexplicated shift
of the constitutive accent from class consciousness to social isolation
as the necessary and sufficient condition for the existence of real
classes, and 2.) if, for the purpose of doing his analysis, we allow
him to 'transcend' his original position and treat classes as 'real'
rather than as artificial statistical groups. Even if we were to grant
him these considerable liberties, his analysis would still be 'inade-
quate' for his expressed purpose of dethroning the reigning middle
class image of Canada. Since he does not know how members define
'middle class,' he has no way of knowing whether his analysis disproves
their social image. In fact, it may do the reverse if members define
middle class in terms of the ownership of gadgetry.

In spite of his conceptual confusion and inconsistency, however,
his analysis is "understandable" on a common-sense level, because we are
familiar with everyday and social scientific usages of the term 'class'
and, on this level, neither Porter nor the readers are bound by the
canons of science (Schutz, 1964: 76-77). However, The Vertical Mosaic
is a social scientific work bound by the canons of science. Therefore
it is incumbent upon its author, if he is to adequately describe the

structure of class and to link class and power, to 1.) explicitly state
the relevance criteria used to select the class variables of life style
and value consumption, 2.) enumerate the classes within his system,
3.) describe the life style and value consumption pattern of each class,
4.) present, in some form, the data upon which these descriptions
were based, along with a methodological note, 5.) state how variables
were synthesized to determine class membership of elites and 6.) ex-
plain how class boundaries were arrived at. The consequence of not
meeting any of these requirements, or some such set (cf. Gross:1949),
is that his analysis of class and his linkage of class and power are
scientifically without foundation.

                       *   *   *

     Had Porter recognized and resolved these problems he would
have been in a position to not only provide an adequate and accurate
description of the structure of class and of the link between class
and power, but might have been led to recognize an important, latent,
finding in his work.

     Besides being able to tightly link ethnicity and class, and
recognizing that "social control by the charter group" (1965: 71-2)
would be more aptly labeled "class control," had Porter laid a founda-
tion for his reconstituted concept of classes-as-socially-isolated-
groups he might have discovered the class nature of the two social
mechanisms which he says (1965: 526-8) serve to co-ordinate elites into
a power structure: kinship and friendship. He found numerous kinship
links within and between elites, as well as friendships "resulting

from living together or having common experience of the same kind of social life." (1965: 527)

In fact, his concept of elite presupposes a shared class background. This can be deduced from his statement that "Validity of the concept 'elite' rests on the probability that the individuals assigned to the group are socially homogeneous" (1965: 303). "Social homogeneity" is not a function of the relationship between frequency of interaction and positive feelings within the elite group. While it is true that members of an elite undoubtedly become more socially homogeneous, and probably group-conscious, validity of the concept 'elite' rests on the probability that the individuals 'assigned to the group are (already) socially homogeneous.' This formulation raises the question of how new members of the middle class can be socially homogeneous with members of upper class in the economic elite. It seems clear, however, that Porter already had the framework for establishing a solid rather than surreptitious link between class and power. Unless he did not recognize this 'latent' finding in his work, this 'pulled-punch' has to be treated as an example of the tactic of undrawn conclusions within his overall 'strategy of respectability.'

Footnotes

1. Class consciousness is the characteristic Porter emphasizes in his definition of classes as social groups. His original formulation of an objective, statistical 'class' system composed of artificial groups emphasizes the characteristic of vertial order, while excluding the other three characteristics. Porter also implicitly draws upon the fourth characteristic, distinctness of interests, when he tells us that large daily newspapers are "instruments of an established upper class" (1965: 463). Unless that class has distinct interests, its instruments of propaganda have no raison d'être.

Chapter Four

The Legitimate Structure of Power

The problems of logical consistency in Porter's analysis of class are mirrored in his analysis of power. As with class, we find Porter shifting his meaning and use of the concept of power. As with class, we find that he 'transcends' his original definition, but in this case his analysis cannot be logically done without such a shift. And, as with class, this shift can only be 'understood' by drawing upon 'what everyone knows,' by treating common-sense and discipline-common knowledge of what power "really" is as a resource.

According to Porter (1965: 201): "Power means the recognized right to make effective decisions on behalf of a group of people." The notion of effective decision making is probably drawn from Lasswell and Kaplan (1950: 74-102), since Porter footnotes them a number of times in his discussion of power. They define power relationally as a policy decision, involving severe sanctions, which is obeyed, i.e., the decision is effective. The idea of "recognized right" appears to be his own formulation and to have two distinct dimensions: internal and external. The internal dimension is the more obvious one: an A makes decisions as a recognized and legitimate representative of a group of people, B. For his analysis, this means that elites are representatives of their institutions. The external dimension appears as the more important one: all A's recognize each other's weight, scope and domain of power (cf. Lasswell and Kaplan, 1950: 77) as legitimate. As Porter (1965: 214) puts it:

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> In this respect the 'rights' about which we have spoken and
> which appear to limit the exercise of power (sic) are really
> the rights of institutional elites to organize and carry out
> their activities. If one elite threatens these rights it will
> be challenged by other elites whose positions are threatened.

As to how these rights are safeguarded and maintained, he tells us that

they "come from the tradition of independence built up by elite groups

within a system of juridical norms" (1965: 214) (emphasis added).

In that Porter identifies power as legitimate, his concept

differs radically from most theorists, who follow Weber (1968: 53)

in distinguishing between power and authority. Porter (1965: 266-7)

responds that the distinction is spurious because "any form of power

can be rationalized as good" and legitimacy is relative. He argues

that any type of regime, no matter how tyrannical, may appear as legi-

timate to the ruled. Going from this point, he tells us that power

must be obeyed to exist and that it is within the province of power

to obtain obedience. Then comes a pivotal point: "If power and

obedience are thus correlative, and if obedience requires the sense of

legitimacy, can there be such a thing as illegitimate power?" (1965:

266) (emphasis added). He answers in the negative and adds that,

furthermore, by shifting perspectives and looking at all sides in

disputes, all power can be seen as legitimate or illegitimate; it

depends upon whose side you want to take. He concludes that, "At most

such a distinction applies only in periods of social transition...

when the prevailing values are being called into question." (1965:

226). In Porter's view, Canada was not into such a period in the early

sixties.[1]

Logical and Utilitarian Problems

This argument and formulation can be criticized on logical

and utilitarian grounds. In terms of his argument, it is illogical

to suppose that "obedience requires the sense of legitimacy" and yet

hold that "it is within the sphere of power to apply sanctions and

thereby defeat resistance and retain obedience." (1965: 226) If there

is resistance, and it is necessary to secure obedience through the

application of negative sanctions, then quite obviously obedience, in

this case, is not forthcoming out of a sense of the legitimacy of the

command or commander. Therefore, obedience does not necessarily require

the sense of legitimacy.

Furthermore, if it is within the province of 'power' to apply

sanctions, it is also within the province of 'power' to secure obedience

by threatening to apply sanctions. In both cases 'power' and obedience

are correlative, but not necessarily linked by the "sense of legitimacy."

Where obedience does require the "sense of legitimacy" is in authority

relations (Bachrach and Baratz, 1963: 638).[2] Since Porter does not dis-

tinguish between power and authority and defines all power as legiti-

mate (as authority), he is unable to analyze those situations where

decisions are effective but not legitimate. As will be apparent, this

is a fatal conceptual flaw.

Given this flaw in his conceptualization of power, we are

faced with important questions as to the usefulness of his concept for

analyzing the structure of power in Canada. If he takes his definition

seriously, all that he can actually describe is the formal structure

of rights as reflected in the configuration of juridical norms which
determine the weight, scope and domain of elites' power (cf. Lasswell
and Kaplan, 1950: 77). Furthermore, if these jurisdictional rights are
"recognized," then there is no reason for elites to be in conflict.
Where there is inter-elite conflict, then obviously jurisdictional rights
are not "recognized," they are in dispute. If such is the case, then
the nature of inter-elite relations is not one of "power" as defined
by Porter.

This logical problem begins to emerge at the end of the first
chapter (1965: 27-8) when Porter tells us that inter-elite conflict can
be seen "at those points where new possibilities appear for exploitation
of social resources." Later on he calls these the "hinge points of
change where new options are to be taken up." (1965: 44) However, the
whole notion of hinge points and new options as the focus of elite con-
flict, implies that "recognized rights" don't exist or aren't clear.
Otherwise, there would be no conflict.

The fact that there is conflict between elites and that one side
does 'take up new options,' cannot be accounted for or analyzed with a
concept of power that a priori identifies all power as legitimate, as
"recognized." Rights must be established, and it is 'real power' which
allows one side to take up an option and, through time, to establish
that option as rightfully theirs. Thus, what is required is what has
been discarded: a distinction between power, e.g., effective decision-
making, and authority, e.g., the recognized right to make effective
decisions. To be sure, even this distinction is crude, for it does not

distinguish power from force, or formal from substantive authority

(cf. Bachrach and Baratz, 1963), but it is basic and necessary for any

analysis of the structure of power.

Power Transcended

When we turn to examine Porter's discussion and analysis of

the structure of power we immediately discover that, just as with class,

he 'transcends' his constricted definition in the process of doing his

analysis. As with class, he is 'understandable' because the word "power"

is so often used in everyday talk, the media, and in professional wri-

tings. It is a resource which he draws upon and uses in familiar, but

inconsistent ways. If we wish to pin down the discipline-common ori-

gins of the concepts he utilizes, it seems that we could point to at

least Weber and Lasswell and Kaplan.

Weber's (1968: 53) concept of power as Dahrendorf points out

(1959: 166), is personal: power is an attribute of a person rather than

of a role or position. This notion of power is especially evident

when Porter (1965: 551) tells us that C.D. Howe, the minister of defense

production in 1955, "was probably the most powerful man in that adminis-

tration." In terms of the formal organization of the cabinet, i.e.,

the structure of "recognized rights," we could have never arrived at

this conclusion. However, what is being dealt with in this statement

is an actor rather than his role. What is being drawn upon in this state-

ment is "the possibility that one actor within a social relationship will

be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless

of the basis on which this probability rests." (Weber, 1968: 53).

It is within the analysis of inter-elite conflict that we would expect Porter to put his concept of power to the greatest and clearest use. Instead, we discover that important examples of inter-elite conflict cannot be understood using his definitions of power. They can only be taken as legitimate examples of power relations if we understand power, as do Lasswell and Kaplan (1950: 74), to be effective decision-making, without such decision-making being necessarily a "recognized right."

When he presents the case of the nationalization of the Canadian Northern and Grant Trunk railways by the Conservatives early in this century (1965: 543), he mentions that "the cabinet minister responsible for the railway nationalization plan, was denounced as a socialist." It is surprising that Porter did not recognize that this dispute and the accusation of 'socialism' revolved around the question of the legitimate scope of government, i.e., the "recognized right to make effective decisions" was apparently in question. The inadequacy of his concept of power is further reflected in the fact that "this period was an important one in shaping present day Canada." (1965: 544) This statement attests to the fact that the configuration of recognized rights is shaped by what other analysts would call "power". If "power means the recognized right...," then, for the sake of consistency and rigour, Porter should have generated another term besides 'power' which would have met his analytical needs.

The British Columbia Electric dispute, which Porter called a "striking example of the conflict between political and economic elites"

(1965: 548), also serves as a striking example of the inadequacy of his concept of power. He writes of the "long legal battle" which followed the expropriation of B.C.E. by Premier Bennett in 1961 and of the 1963 B.C. Supreme Court decision of Chief Justice Sherwood Lett to the effect that "the expropriation proceedings of 1961 were illegal and unconstitutional." (Porter, 1965: 549).

Between 1961 and the 1963 court decision, the B.C. government had run B.C.E. under the name of "The British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority," and had reaped a profit of twenty million dollars. B.C. Power Corporation, the legal "father" of B.C.E., felt that it should receive compensation for profit loss during the interim, plus an additional cheque to cover the difference between what the Government paid for expropriation and the actual value of B.C.E. This last point was much more of a concern to B.C. Power Corporation than the fact of expropriation itself.

On September 27, 1963 the two sides reached an out of court agreement at the prodding of Chief Justice Lett, who had decided the real worth of B.C.E. and, consequently, how much the Provincial Government had yet to pay. The payment did not include compensation for loss of earnings. After settlement, Attorney General Bonner stated that the Lett decision, which pronounced the expropriation illegal and unconstitutional, had been set aside and could not be formally entered as a judgment. The Chairman of B.C. Power Corporation said the judgment would still stand as a legal authority, as a precedent. The counsel for B.C. P.C. took the position that as a result of the judgment B.C. Hydro and Power Authority had no legal existence or authority (Ardies, 1963: 1-2).

The striking conclusion to be drawn, which Porter ignored, is that an effective decision was made by a B.C. political elite in 1961 which went beyond the recognized institutional scope of that elite's power. Two years later, Bennett's 'decision' was declared to have broken the all-important system of juridicial norms which safeguards the autonomy of institutions. Two months later, when the dispute was resolved, the Provincial Government treated the solution as victory (Sherman, 1966: 277). Their decision was still effective, even though it was still "illegal and unconstitutional." This uncomfortable fact was simply downplayed and bypassed with rhetoric of a possible post facto constitutional amendment (Ardies, 1963: 2).

Thus it should be abundantly clear that Porter's original concept of power is inappropriate, inadequate and misleading as an analytical tool for describing relations between elites. His concept ignores the possible variation in bases of obedience, thereby allowing him to identify all power as legitimate, as consisting of the "recognized right to make effective decisions." Logically, all that can be done with this formulation is to delimit the formal structure of power as reflected in a system of juridical norms. The actual structure of power revealed at the "hinge points of change," and during "border disputes," cannot be analyzed.

When Porter does attempt to expose the actual structure of power, he necessarily transcends his definition of power and draws upon other discipline-common conceptualizations. The apparent coherence and rigour of his analysis, however, depends upon his and the readers' know-

ledge of what power 'really' is, rather than upon the consistent and logical use of his definition of it. Thus while there is no foundation supporting Porter's structure of class, there is a foundation under his structure of power. The problem is that it is both too narrow and faulty to offer any support.

Footnotes

1. Given his avowed evolutionary perspective in writing The Vertical
   Mosaic (Porter, 1970: 181), and his statement that a "macro-
   orientation requires a time dimension rather than the static or
   'moment in time' orientation of equilibrium theory" (Porter,
   1970: 152-3), it is surprising that he formulates a 'static' con-
   cept of power chosen to analyze one 'moment in time.'

2. Bachrach and Baratz take Lasswell and Kaplan's formulation of autho-
   rity as "formal power" (1950: 133) to be inadequate because it
   identifies all law as legitimte, without accounting for 'how mem-
   bers see it.' The "sense of legitimacy" 'resides' within the
   commanded's consciousness rather than in the law.

Chapter Five

The Ambiguous Context of Elitist Democracy

The "meaning" and significance of the class and power struc-
tures in Canada can only be determined within a normative context.
Such a context is provided by democratic theory. Unfortunately, there
are a number of democratic theories. We have mentioned thorough-
going democratic theory and the theory of democratic elitism. There
are others.[1] Which theory of democracy Porter is operating in terms
of is ambiguous: thus, so are the meaning and significance of his
findings. The theory he appears to operate with is the one which robs
his findings of import. Had he treated democracy as a topic he would
have been led to some important conclusions and could have provided
The VM with a critical context.

Early in Chapter One of The VM Porter mentions the importance
of defining and clarifying terms "to avoid misunderstanding and con-
fusion" (1965: 6). Unfortunately, he does not define and clarify
what he means by "democracy." He trades on common sense notions of
democracy when he discusses social images of equality and diffused
power in the first chapter. When discussing the Canadian political
system in Chapter Twelve he makes Robert Lynd's[2] distinction between
"liberal democracy," which combines democracy in the "political" sphere
with capitalism in the economic sphere, and "thorough-going democracy"
which expresses and implements democratic values in all spheres. While
he does mention in the final chapter that "Canada...has a long way to

go to become in any sense a thorough-going democracy" (1965: 557),
for a variety of reasons, it appears that The VM is presented within
an elite democratic context.

The appearance of democratic elitism as the context has to
be extrapolated from his statements and the ethico-theoretical perspec-
tives he employed. If he were value-consistent with his 1961 posi-
tion we would expect him to explicitly employ a thorough-going democra-
tic framework. In spite of his mention of this framework, the logic
and thrust of his argument against liberal democracy do the work of
rejecting a thorough-going democratic framework and suggesting a demo-
cratic elitist one. This is because both the liberal and thorough-
going theories are essentially normative while the elitist brand of
democracy is a descriptive, "empirical" theory. It is the latter type
which Porter seeks.

In the last chapter, Porter sketches the 19th century liberal
theory of democracy. This theory assumed that man was rational and if
given equality of opportunity and the right to participate in decision-
making he would build a society wherein he could realize his human
potential and find happiness. Porter rejects this theory.

> To use the liberal theory as a basis for empirical research
> into the processes of power would be absurd in view of the
> frequency with which that theory has been empirically re-
> futed. (1965: 556)

On the last page of the text of The VM he reiterates that:

> The nineteenth-century notion of a liberal citizen-participa-
> ting democracy is obviously not a satisfactory model by which
> to examine the processes of decision-making in either the eco-
> nomic or political context. (1965: 558)

Of course, here he is referring to the important voting studies

of the fifties, especially Voting by Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee

(1954), which definitely undermined the liberal assumption that man

is rational, competent and interested when it comes to participating

in politics. Even those, such as Graeme Duncan and Steven Lukes,

who opposed the conclusions which the studies drew, had to agree that

"the voters fail to satisfy most of the traditional requirements of

democracy" (1967: 166).

What Porter apparently did not recognize in his acceptance

of the popular rejections of liberal democratic theory is that if these

'empirical refutations' are valid for liberal democratic theory, they

provide an even stronger refutation of thorough-going democracy. This

is true because the only relevant differences between these types of

democratic theory is in the domain and amount of citizen-participa-

tion. Whereas liberal democracy calls for, at least, representative

democracy[3] within the "political" sphere, i.e., government, thorough-

going democratic theory requires participatory democracy in all the

major spheres of society, e.g., government, economy, education. Fur-

thermore, both theories of democracy share the same assumptions regard-

ing rational "democratic man" (the brother of rational economic man),

as well as the same normative ends, "to provide the conditions for

the full and free development of the essential human capacities of

all the members of the society" (Macpherson, 1965: 37).[4] Thus the

arguments and data put forward in the voting studies, which empirically

destroy the underpinning assumptions of liberal democratic theory,

undermine thorough-going democratic theory in the same manner. Both

theories are non-empirical, descriptively inadequate and inaccurate.

It is quite clear from Porter's statements, quoted above, that he requires that democratic theory provide a "satisfactory model" to guide empirical research. The one theory which can do that, and within which his study appears to be done, is the one suggested by the voting researchers. The conclusion that Berelson, et. al., reached is not that we should rededicate ourselves to the realization of democracy via education and realignment of the present system with democratic theory. Rather, they concluded that democratic theory was out of alignment with social realities and therefore needed to be reformulated. In that the democratic system in the U.S. had survived and grown, they concluded that "where the classic theory is defective is in its concentration on the individual citizen" (1954: 312). This led them to examine the "requirements for the survival of the total democratic system" (1954: 322) and adopt an elitist theory of democracy.

This new theory followed the lines set down by Joseph Schumpeter in Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy. It had as central a couple of new twists on classical liberal democratic theory. Democracy is now conceived of as simply "a political method, that is to say, a certain type of institutional arrangement for arriving at political...decisions and hence incapable of being an end in itself, irrespective of what decisions it will produce under given historical conditions" (1950: 242). Thus, the ethical end of democracy, "to provide the conditions for the full and free development of the essential human capacities of all the members of the society" (Macpherson,

1965: 37), is done away with. The second twist in this new theory

is that the democratic method, i.e., "democracy," is defined as "that

institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which

individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive strug-

gle for the people's vote" (1950: 269).

Central to the democratic method are the "rules of the game"

which operate to maintain the required institutional arrangement.[5]

From Seymour Martin Lipset's Political Man we can abstract two major

rules of the game. The first is the compromise rule: No group is to

desire any one thing too much, so much that it cannot abide defeat by

the majority. The second is the cross-pressures rule: Interests must

not line up in the same way for the same people (1960: 1-24). If proce-

dures, institutions and values exist which assure compromise and cross-

pressures, the system will experience enough conflict to be progressive

but will be cohesive enough to have consensus. Not surprisingly, given

the Cold War experience of these theorists, the major concern of demo-

cratic elitists has been the stability of their "democratic" system.

The result of this "empirically adequate" theory is that a

situation is labelled as democratic where elites, playing by the rules

of the game, compete with each other, within the "political" sphere,

during elections. Thus democratic elitism is still "liberal:" state

and society are separated, but government "by the people" is replaced

by "government approved by the people" (Schumpeter, 1950: 246).

That Porter is working within this theory has already been

suggested in light of his elitist and functionalist ethico-theoretical

perspectives. The latter perspective divides society into sectors,

with a political sub-system, and defines the Good in terms of the

whole, the total social system. The former perspective is a direct

resource for democratic elite theorists, with its emphasis on the

circulation of elites (Pareto). In fact, the only theory of demo-

cracy which is compatible with (not to mention dependent upon)

the existence of strong elites is Schumpeter-Lipset's.

When he presents the theory of elites he is, whether he real-

izes it or not, supporting and presenting a central feature of em-

pirical elitist democratic theory.

> Elites both compete and co-operate with one another: they
> compete to share in the making of decisions of major impor-
> tance for the society, and they co-operate because together
> they keep the society working as a going concern....It is
> elites who have the capacity to introduce change, but changes
> bring about shifts in the relations between elites. Because
> they all have power as their institutional right they can
> check each other's power, and, therefore, co-operation and
> accommodation, as well as conflict, characterize their rela-
> tions. (1965: 27)

This quote can be treated as a restatement of the consensus-conflict

motif within the literature of democratic elitism. It is also central

to the equilibrium model within functionalist theory. Within this

quote it is also important to note that innovation, change, or "crea-

tive behaviour" as Porter put it in 1961, is expected to occur at

the top. On the next page, while rejecting the notion of change com-

ing from below, in the form of class conflict, he suggests that these

classes "may, however, be the source of important dynamic elements to

be mobilized by institutional leaders" (1965: 28). Thus he displays

some of the attitudes which are essential characteristics of the demo-

cratic elitist position.

When Porter discusses the Canadian Political System he

draws upon democratic elitist theory.

> In a differentiated pluralistic society there will not be
> general agreement on the means to be employed to reach these
> general values (of progress and improvement). There will, how-
> ever, be some agreement on the ground rules. There are con-
> stitutional ground rules, but at the same time there is a body
> of political conventions which political parties observe, one
> of the most important being that the political party in power
> permits its rivals to exist. The two-party system is a func-
> tionally appropriate way of mediating the 'conservative' and
> 'progressive' social forces. (1965: 367)

In "pluralistic" society the "ground rule" which Porter mentions is

a derivation of Lipset's compromise rule. Porter's functionalist

approach meshes nicely with democratic elitism, as we find conflict

and consensus producing equilibrium via a two-party system of "con-

servative" and "progressive" elites.

Unfortunately, Canada does not have "conservative" and

"progressive" social forces institutionalized in her two-party system.

"The dialogue is between unity and discord rather than progressive

and conservative forces" (1965: 369), with the "maintenance of national

unity" as the major goal. Any "polarization to right and left in

Canadian politics is regarded as disruptive. Consequently the main

focus of Canadian politics has been to the right and the maintenance

of the status quo" (1965: 369). Canada has "brokerage" rather than

"creative" politics: too much consensus and not enough conflict. This

is an important point, for Porter has shifted from treating democratic

elitism as a "satisfactory model" to guide empirical research, to a

treatment of democratic elitism wherein the latter is treated as

providing a <u>normative criteria</u> for evaluating the Canadian poli-

tical system. Thus, what Gad Horowitz (1965: 14) took to be the

major point of Porter's work, is made within, and is entirely depen-

dent upon a democratic elitist framework.

A Value Contradiction

As with Porter's assumption of the ethico-theoretical per-

spectives of elite analysis and functionalism, his utilization of,

and dependence upon, the theory of democratic elitism is a contrad-

diction of his 1961 value position. In his 1961 essay he was a fer-

vent supporter of socialist, thorough-going democracy, which conflicts

with democratic elitism on at least six points:

1. Where Robert Lynd's favored theory sees democracy as both

    a method and an ethical end, democratic elitism sees it

    only as a method.

2. Where thorough-going democracy defines the citizens' in-

    terest as both in the end result and in the production of

    that end result through participation; 'democratic elitism

    defines their interests one-dimensionally in terms of end

    results, <u>e.g.</u>, 'more butter and guns.' In fact, the latter

    theory sees a certain level of apathy and non-participation

    as functional for the system. Non-voters and occasional

    voters provide flexibility and stabliity for the system

    (Berelson, <u>et. al.,</u> 1954: 316).

3. Where thorough-going theory aims at assuring equality of condition and power, elitist democracy is concerned only with equal opportunity to gain the prerequisites of power, i.e., elite status.

4. While the former theory defines as "political" any decision-making which significantly affects societal values, the latter theory operates within a liberal tradition and limits its definition of political to governmental decision-making and that which relates to it.

5. While the former theory relies upon broadening social participation to counter the authoritarian propensity of both the elites and the masses, the latter theory relies upon the elites to safeguard the democratic system against the authoritarian masses.

6. Thus democratic elitists view the elite-mass structure of modern society as being in the best interests of democracy, while thorough-going democrats wish to breakdown and decentralize this structure as much as possible.[6]

Put simply, Porter's use of democratic elitism as a resource constitutes the major value inconsistency of The VM. His confused and confusing use of "democracy" suggests that this major inconsistency may be explained as a consequence of Porter only being familiar enough with the literature on democracy to draw upon the general features of the discipline-popular, respectable, theory of democratic elitism. This would help account for two of his errors:

1. He approvingly mentioned thorough-going democracy without
    apparently realizing that he must reject that theory on
    the same grounds that he accepts the refutation of liberal
    democracy: both are 'empirically unsound.'

2. At the same time, however, he drew upon democratic elitism
    as the "satisfactory model" to guide his empirical research;
    but then turned around and treated that theory normatively
    when he discovered 'too much' consensus and 'not enough'
    conflict, in Canadian politics.

There is a third "error" which follows upon the previous two.
When Porter turns around and uses democratic elitism as more than an
empirical theory, i.e., as a normative theory, he allows and instructs
us to treat all of The VM in terms of the normative criteria provided
by democratic elitism. Thus, while it is unquestionably the case that
"Canada...has a long way to go to become in any sense a thorough-going
democracy" (1965: 557), the latter theory is empirically unsound and
therefore is not to be used. The road to becoming a full-blown elitist
democracy is to be taken instead, and, not surprisingly, it is a
shorter road. All that is needed is a bit more money spent on elite
education, and a circulation of elites, perhaps bringing the NDP into
office. This liberal, elitist answer is soothing, as it was to the
Cold War warriors of the early sixties in the U.S. But the respect-
ability of The VM is only gained at the sake of down-playing, if not
doing away with, the ethical ends democracy should pursue.

Even if we were to lower the requirements of scholarship and

allow his unfamiliarity with the literature on democracy, we would
still expect him to recognize the major conflicts between the general
features of liberal democratic elitism and socialist thorough-going
democracy. However, even in 1961, his stock of knowledge as a social-
ist may have provided him with the central tenets of thoroughgoing
democracy, without him being familiar with the literature on democracy,
per se. This is not to say that the label of "value inconsistent"
is inappropriately applied in Porter's case. Rather, Porter should
be labelled value inconsistent, as well as "theoretically innocent,"
to use C.P. Wolf's charitable description of Porter (1970: xix). Were
we to be less charitable, we might say that the lack of any foundation
for his analysis of class; the narrow, faulty foundation for his ana-
lysis of power; and his loose employment of a democratic elitist con-
tent suggest theoretical ignor-ance.

Footnotes

1. See C.B. Macpherson (1965).

2. Porter's "Power and Freedom in Canadian Democracy" appears, at key points, to be a Canadian version of Lynd's 1957 essay, "Power as a Problem and Resource in American Society."

3. What Porter means by "citizen-participating democracy" (1965: 558) is apparently Jeffersonian, participatory democracy. However, nineteenth-century liberal democratic theory variously called for participatory or representative (J.S. Mill) democracy. The latter has become the twentieth-century form of liberal democracy.

4. Macpherson here refers to the shared goal of liberal democracy, "Communist" democracy and the classic, pre-liberal democracy of Rousseau now popular in the "underdeveloped" countries. It is the latter form of democracy, of Macpherson's three, which may be called "thorough-going."

5. The rejection of democracy-as-an-end has created a curious normative vacuum for elite theorists, which has been filled by the "rules of the game." As we've witnessed in the U.S. during the past decade, the rules of the game are elevated above democratic ideals by elites. This has been especially so when it is the masses who, in complete and foolish ignorance of the new theory of democracy, call for the realization of those outdated ideals.

6. These six points owe much to Peter Bachrach's comparison of democratic elitism and what he calls "modern self-developmental demo-

cracy" (1967). The major difference between the latter theory and thorough-going democracy is on point three in the text. Where thorough-going democracy calls for equality of condition, Bachrach only calls for equality of opportunity. On this point Porter may actually be closer to Bachrach than to Lynd.

Chapter Six

The Critical Context of Democracy

Had Porter treated democracy seriously, and familiarised him-
self with the literature, he would have discovered that the liberal
and the thorough-going theories of democracy _cannot_ be empirically re-
futed. In the process he would have come to realize the difference
between "normative" and "descriptive" theories. This would have al-
lowed him to use a descriptive theory heuristically to uncover the
relationships between class, democracy, power and ideology, while
retaining his normative theory as a yardstick to measure the State
of Canada. All this, however, would have required Porter to operate
with a strategy of integrity rather than respectability.

What the authors of the voting studies ignored, and what
Porter apparently wasn't aware of, is that while it is possible to
"empirically refute" the liberal theory of democracy as descriptively
inadequate, no amount of empirical data can refute it, or thorough-
going democracy, on grounds of _normative_ "inadequacy," _i.e._, facts
cannot refute values. On this issue, Duncan and Lukes have pointed
out that the pre-liberal and liberal theories of Rousseau and J.S. Mill
"are a critique of reality in terms of a vision of human nature and
possibilities, and for this reason cannot simply be refuted on the
grounds that people do not satisfy the required standards and that _soi-
distant_ 'democracies' nonetheless survive" (1967: 171).

That leading social scientists would turn their backs on
liberal democratic theory when the facts showed the U.S. to be less

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the ideal democracy than it was portrayed to be, has to be under-
stood in terms of the historical conditions since World War II. The
Cold War had the U.S. locked in mortal combat with the "Red Menance."
To be critical of the American political system was to play into the
hands of the International Communist Conspiracy. Besides, it was quite
clear to almost everyone in the U.S. that they were better off under
what-was-called-democracy than they would have been under Communism.
Thus a questionable continuum-yardstick was set up by Raymond Aron
in 1950 (and referred to approvingly in The VM). "Soviet" and "west-
ern" societies were formulated as ideal types residing at opposite
ends of the continuum. In this way citizens and social scientists in
the western societies could compare their society to Russian society,
instead of comparing their society to the ideal of liberal democracy.
The result was self-satisfied celebration rather than self-critical
honesty. "Empirically adequate,"[1] descriptive, elitist democratic
theory developed as an historical product of this period. It descri-
bed that which existed, labelled it "democracy," and that was 'em-
pirically adequate' for essentially practical purposes.

Had Porter recognized the false refutation of liberal demo-
cratic theory and the empirical adequacy of democratic elitism he
could have safely retained thorough-going democracy as a yardstick
and used democratic elitism heuristically. The use of the latter
would have required uncharacteristic diligence on Porter's part so as
to not fall into the liberal apologist trap of treating democratic
elitism normatively. Assuming that that could have been accommplished,

let us now turn to the discoveries and undrawn conclusions hidden

wtihin the respectable pages of The VM.

The first discovery has to do with brokerage politics. If

Porter had treated democracy as a topic he would have been able to

improve his explanation of brokerage politics by examining the rela-

tionship of the two "rules of the game" stated in the previous chap-

ter. Brokerage politics can be best explained in terms of the working

of the government itself. If both political parties "are closely

linked with corporate enterprise" (1965: 368), then there are inadequ-

ate cross-pressure, which is a violation of rule two. As a consequence

of rule one working where number two is violated, you have little con-

flict, with agreement or compromise as the general state of affairs.

One final result of the working out of rule one when rule two is vio-

lated is a situation in which people care less and less about the

issues that are involved, i.e., apathy. Apathy and brokerage poli-

tics are to be expected as a result of the working out of the rules of

the game in Canadian society. Furthermore, when both parties are

rooted in corporate enterprise, and when corporate capitalism requires

national unity for the sake of efficiency, brokerage politics on the

right are to be expected. Which is to say, the operation of the poli-

tical system cannot be fully understood in a western society unless

it is examined within the larger, economic context, of corporate capi-

talism.

Had Porter treated democratic elitism heuristically within

a corporate capitalist context he would have discovered that "democracy,"

as it presently operates in Canada, serves upper class interests. This requires pulling together some of Porter's findings and drawing some provisional conclusions which suggest lines for future research.

Mobility into the upper class is quite low (1965: 293) and looks to get worse because of the "increasing bureaucratization of the economic system through the development of the national corporation" (1965: 283). This is the case as a result of the small labour pool of middle and upper class college graduates provided by the class-determined education system in Canada. Porter pointed out that this "leads to an increasingly closed system of stratification" (1965: 283). However, there is a considerable amount of mobility into the middle class (1965: 51), which would seem to ensure the growth of the corporate labour pool. In the past, however, the most upwardly mobile middle class members have emigrated to the U.S. and elsewhere, while their positions have been taken by immigrants from other countries. The upshot of this situation is that the top of the class structure remains rigid and experiences high class continuity between generations, while the classes below are in a state of flux and therefore experience much less class continuity.

This situation needs to be set in a context of corporate capitalist society, where property rights and the legal fiction of the corporation-as-citizen account for the wealth which defines the upper as the upper class. Given this situation and its historical context, in whose favor do the rules of the game operate? The obvious answer is the upper class. Because of their high class continuity, and

rootedness in the corporate system, they experience fewer cross pres-
sures than any other class. Their class interests are more clearly
visible to themselves as a result of their continuity, which suggests,
as Porter constantly does, that they compose not only a socially iso-
lated group, but they are group, i.e., class, conscious. All of
Porter's findings point to almost a classical case of the existence
of what Marx called a class-for-itself (1964: 187), which has the
tactical advantage of any organized minority (Mosca) over any class-
in-itself.

The fact that the upper class faces fewer cross-pressures is
apparent at the point where the violation of the rule of compromise
would occur. The one point, paradoxically, where the upper class will
violate the first rule is on any occasion where the rules of the game
themselves are called into question. At that point the legitimacy of
the authority of the governing class[2] is in question and it is naive
to expect them, or their representative elite, to compromise their
power.[3]

A serious treatment of how the rules of the game are reflected
in the institutional arrangement of democracy, integrated with a serious
class analysis, along the lines set out above, would have had another
pay off. If democracy-as-it-operates-now serves governing class
interests,[4] and if the descriptive content of Canada's three "social
images" of middle classness and equality of opportunity and power are
false (as the latter two certainly are), then liberal democracy is an
ideology in Marx' sense (Lichtheim, 1967). This holds whether by "lib-
eral democracy" is meant classical liberal democracy or elitist liberal

democracy, for Canada does not even meet the minimum requirements of democracy embodied in the latter theory. It does not have equality of opportunity and it does not have the amount of mobility required for the individual "circulation of elites."[5] It is the existence of liberal democracy as an ideology which legitimates and obscures the class-power structure. It keeps the "mosaic" vertical.

The ideological function of liberal democratic theory reveals the problematic nature of legitimacy. In order to handle this problem, Porter would have had to distinguish between power and authority. In that he gave two chapters on a discussion of the ideological elite, and declared that the popularity of Canada's "social image" was due to the workings and Weltanschanuung of media people, it is surprising that he didn't recognize the separate but related nature of power/authority and legitimacy.

If he had paid attention to his problem and given a more thoughtful examination of the liberal democratic "social images" with which he begins his book, he might have realized the triadic nature of any social philosophy (Mills, 1963: 188). He draws upon liberal democratic theory, and would have discovered its ideological nature had he used democratic elitist theory consciously and heuristically. Another dimension should have been obvious to him: liberal democratic social philosophy provides a set of ideals. Members' belief that 'Canada is middle class,' 'We have equal opportunity' and 'We all share power' (1965: 3, 4, 6,) are not only descriptive statements, they have a normative content. If Canadians believe these statements

are true, they are proud of it. To any Canadian liberal democrat, 'Canada should be middle class,' 'We should have equal opportunity,' and 'we should share power.'

Thus when Porter demonstrates the descriptive, or 'theoretical,' inadequacy of these social images, he also exposes the gap between the ideal and the actual. As has been discovered in studies of social change, the one universal motor cause of change is "lack of close correspondence between the 'ideal' and the 'actual'" (Moore, 1963: 18). If Porter is correct in asserting that lack of educational facilities is the 'cause' of "mobility deprivation" (1965: 49), and if we were correct in Chapter Two in concluding that it is in the governing class' interest to depend upon immigrant technicians rather than shoulder an extra tax burden to expand Canadian educational facilities, then we may draw another provisional conclusion. By not recognizing the normative dimension of Canada's "social images," Porter misses the opportunity of pointing to potential class conflict and the de-legitimation of elites.[6]

To conclude this speculative excursion; had Porter used demo-cratic elitism heuristically, he would have recognized that democratic elitism is an ideology for elite consumption. It is an obstacle to the fulfillment of the ends which he believes a society should pursue.

> The answer surely lies in the desirability of social participa-tion in defining and achieving goals, in the release of the potential for a creative life shared with others, governed not through competitiveness but through co-operation. (Porter, 1961: 35)

Thorough-going democratic planning and decentralization will never be
instituted to achieve these ends as long as the belief persists, and
is propagated by well known social scientists, that <u>what we have</u> is
democracy, and that all that is needed is expanded elite education
and circulation. The corrallory is that <u>any</u> major change would auto-
matically include <u>loss</u> of democracy.

*   *   *

Had Porter only used democratic elitism to guide his empirical
research, while maintaining and clarifying his own value position
vis-à-vis thorough-going democracy, he would have provided <u>The Vertical</u>
<u>Mosaic</u> with the one context within which his findings have the most
significance and impact. What significance and impact the book does
have is muted because the context of his findings appears to be demo-
cratic elitism. As a result, the book depends for impact upon what-
everyone-knows about 'how things are supposed to be' in a democracy.
However, since <u>The VM</u> is a social scientific work, and "democracy" is
anything but a simple, common-sense concept, democracy should have been
treated as a topic rather than as a resource.

In the end, his strategy of respectability cannot spare him
from an unfavorable comparison with C. Wright Mills. Robert Lynd's
criticism of Mills and <u>The Power Elite</u> is even more strikingly appro-
priate for John Porter and <u>The Vertical Mosaic.</u>

> Mills' failure to deal with the meanings for democracy of
> the impressive power trends he analyzes is the colossal
> loose end of <u>The Power Elite</u>. (1968: 107)

Footnotes

1. The "empirical" nature of democratic elitism was its major selling point among "apolitical," "value-free" social scientists who sought the respectability given the "hard" (read "real") scientists.

2. Porter's findings, when extricated from his inconsistencies and set upon firm foundations, point to the existence of what G. William Domhoff has called a "governing class." "A 'governing class' is a social upper class which owns a disproportionate amount of a country's wealth, receives a disproportionate amount of a country's yearly income, and contributes a disproportionate number of its members to the controlling institutions and key decision-making groups of the country" (1967: 5).

3. The recent FLQ crisis is an example of a case where the rules of the game were challenged on the basis of the legitimacy of the (English) governing class' domination of Quebec. The government of upper class member P.E. Trudeau refused to compromise until after Laporte was dead and the Englishman Cross was left. That "compromise" was considered a victory by and for the government.

4. If this were not the case, we would certainly expect members of the governing class to be actively participating as members of the "political" elite. As was pointed out in our discussion of "unanswered questions," members of the governing class see no threat from the middle class dominated political system, and therefore do not actively participate.

5. As Bottomore has pointed out (1964: 48), Pareto uses this concept
at different times 1.) to refer to a process in which _individuals_
circulate between the elite and the non-elite, or 2.) to refer to
a process whereby _one elite_ is replaced by another. My use of
the concept refers to its former denotation.

6. Both of which are important from the evolutionary perspective
which he espouses (1970: 181). As was mentioned in Chapter Two,
Porter would have done wisely to have drawn upon conflict theory:
"Every society rests on constraint of some of its members by
others" (Dahrendorf, 1964: 103).

Chapter Seven

Summary and Conclusion

Irving Louis Horowitz' declaration that The Vertical Mosaic
"is the sociological study of present-day Canada" (1966: 862) is as
sad as it is true. This essay has attempted to counter the initial
euphoric reception of The VM by looking past its impressive array of
data. In so doing, we have discovered conceptual confusion, theore-
tical poverty and ethical duplicity.

In light of Porter's 1961 value position the 'strategy of
respectability' he appears to have employed in doing The VM consti-
tutes ethical duplicity. In attempting to be "simultaneously polemi-
cal and respectable" Porter muted his radicalism. He did make occa-
sional use of polemical rhetoric. However, the fact that 1.) he
formulated his concepts in so narrow a fashion, 2.) he did not ex-
plicitly answer the questions he raised, and 3.) he held off from
drawing any controversial, even if warranted, conclusions, assured his
work of a warm reception in liberal circles. Aside from his presenta-
tion, the major value inconsistencies were his adoption of an
elitist-functionalist ethico-theoretical perspective, and the implicit
use of democratic elitism as the theoretical context for his study.
Porter's 'strategy of respectability' thus stands as an almost com-
plete compromise of the socialist, thorough-going democratic value
position he held in 1961.

When we turn to the multiple conceptual and theoretical pro-

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blems in The VM, we find that, to a degree, they are a consequence of his 'strategy of respectability.' If Porter had not attempted to be so narrow and respectable in his definition of class, his distinction between "real middle class" and "middle majority" would not have been needed. If he had not tried to be respectable, he could have treated class as a topic and provided a theoretical foundation for his analysis of the structure of class in Canada. Had he not been blinded by respectability, he might have recognized that a theoretically strong link between class and power was already available to him, in the form of his data on elite kinship and friendship networks.

If Porter had treated democracy as a topic, he would have been able to retain thorough-going democracy as a context, while using, rather than being used by, elitist democracy. Thus he would not have committed the logical inconsistencies of drawing unknowingly on contradictory theories of democracy. As the previous chapter suggested, the consistent, heuristic, use of one particular theory of democracy could have supplied Porter with a whole host of potentially fruitful hypotheses.

The 'strategy of respectability,' however, cannot account for the conceptual and theoretical problems surrounding Porter's use of power. He did treat power as a topic, but given that his analysis of the British Columbia Electric dispute 'transcends' his definition of power, it is clear that his treatment was inadequate. Had he been more attuned to the relationship between values and science he might have recognized that, all along, his definition of power had been

inappropriate for his analytical needs.

Towards a Politics of Experience

In conclusion, our analysis suggests two points. Both of
these points are rooted in the everyday world and both can be treated
programatically as 'external' answers to Porter's problems. Their
intriguing feature, when taken together is that they appear programatic-
ally paradoxical. From our perspective, the resolution of this paradox
constitutes the major problem and hope for Political Sociology.

The first point is that Porter would have produced a much
finer and incisive piece of scholarship if he had rigourously worked
from the ethico-theoretical perspective he held in his 1961 essay. The
benefits of a neo-Marxist approach have been suggested in the approach
our criticismshave taken here. Programmatically speaking, Canadian
Sociology, especially Porter's brand, has to get beyond vulgar, ideo-
logical caricatures of Marxism and come to grips with the fact that
Marxist analyses 'make more sense of the world' then do any other ap-
proaches currently enjoying popularity among Political Sociologists
in Canada.

The second point is equally programmatic. Porter's theore-
tical innocence and his dependency upon the everyday and discipline-
common meanings of his concepts are not problems unique to him. The
problem of conceptual confusion is a general one haunting all social
scientists. This has to do with the fact that acts of scientific
theorizing are essentially solitary, but the communication of scienti-
fic findings requires a return to the intersubjective reality of the

everyday world. This "paradox of communication" (Schutz, 1962: 257)
is especially problematic for social scientists because we operate
with second degree constructs (Schutz, 1962: 6) expressed in terms
derived from everyday usage (Berger, 1963: 25). This problem is
further compounded by the existence of multiple and incompatible de-
finitions of the same 'objects' within social science. Because we
are members as well as scientists this paradox sometimes is not re-
cognized as problematic, and therefore isn't provisionally resolved
with the rigour and consistency demanded by science.

As we have seen, in Porter's case, this paradox is both pro-
blematic and unrecognized. However, in his case, as in the case of
all conventional, 'positivist' social scientists the problem is even
further compounded. These sociologists find themselves dependent
upon common-sense constructs, while at the same time attempting to
rise above, and disassociate themselves from, common-sense.

The criticisms in this essay have been offered entirely within
Porter's 'paradigm.' The nature of his problems with communication,
however, suggest that value consistency and positivist rigour aren't
the final answers. What is needed in Political Sociology is the shift
to a 'paradigm' which recognizes the social scientist's rootedness in
the everyday world, and rigourously treats the experience of that world
as the beginning and ending points for all investigation. Such a
'paradigm' in social science would rest upon a phenomenological founda-
tion, such as the one proposed by Alfred Schutz (1967).

Thus we are faced with the paradoxical situation of calling

for both Marxism and Phenomenology as guiding lights for Political Sociologists. We are calling for an improbable synthesis: the re-conciliation of materialist and, so-called, 'idealist' world views. Obviously we cannot resolve this paradox here. Possibly it cannot be resolved. However, there are gratifying signs in the literature (Schroyer, 1970; Litchman, 1970; Klare, 1971; Zaner, 1971), that Marxists and Phenomenologists are beginning to recognize that they each have something to offer the other.

As a consequence of this exchange, we may be in the position of having the tools and framework to do an accurate and 'adequate' analysis of class and power in Canada. If so, it is imperative that those tools be rigourously employed in an intellectually honest fashion. The framework must be made explicit and the whole enterprise must be examined and evaluated by a critical audience. The impera-tive for this arduous task does not emanate simply from some abstract ideal of science. Rather, it emanates from our experience of a 'concrete', but constituted, social world going mad.

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