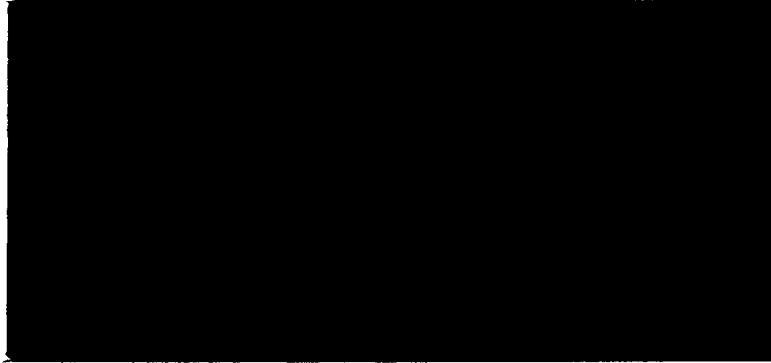




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**"A People Without Social Relations is a
People Without Property: Property,
Relationality, and Social Networks in
the Formation of Political Rights**

Margaret R. Somers

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**A PEOPLE WITHOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS IS A PEOPLE WITHOUT
PROPERTY:
Property, Relationality, and Social Networks in the Formation of Political
Rights***

by

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**A PEOPLE WITHOUT SOCIAL RELATIONS
IS A PEOPLE WITHOUT PROPERTY:
Property, Relationality, and Social Networks in the
Formation of Political Rights**

Property has long held a foundational place in political theories of rights. The idea that the private and autonomous sphere of property offers rights and protections against the omnipresent potential tyranny of the public state can readily be traced back to Locke's treatises on property, labor, and rights in which he argues the sole purpose for which government exists is to protect and secure its subjects' property.¹ Most crucially, he insists that the right to this property--which he defines as "lives, liberties and estates"--is a natural right rather than an arbitrary one contingent on the will of a ruler (II, p.368). For Locke what makes these property rights natural is their rootedness in the deeply private sphere of human labor, more specifically by "mixing our labour" with God's common ground (II, p.308).² A different Republican strand of influence reaches back to Machiavelli's celebration of small agricultural property as the source of political virtue and liberty.³ Only the capacity for self-support which such property provides can secure for people the material conditions for independent political participation, that is, political rights beyond the influence of corruption. The absence of such property conduces to dependence as the propertyless are vulnerable to corruption by the rich--the bloated property owners who will inevitably use money to politically influence weaker citizens (pp.102-4). Again, the privacy of ownership is assumed to found the rights to public liberty.

Finally, yet another influential variant on property and rights can be found in Marx.⁴ Marx begins from the presupposition that freedom is rooted in the autonomous human capacity for free labor; inexorably this points to waged-labor capitalist control over the means and ends of production as the source of unfreedom. Capitalism's exponential dependence on the creation of surplus value

demands (beyond the will of individual capitalists) a comparable continual increase in the exploitation and alienation of human labor. Combined with the labor theory of value, discussed by Ian Shapiro in the first essay in this volume, a powerful claim emerges in Marx for political freedom to lie in the expropriation of capitalist property at the point of production.

Strikingly, these ideologically dissimilar theories clearly converge on a single epistemological premise: political rights and freedoms are the historically contingent effect; changing property relations are the foundational natural object and the cause of rights.⁵ In natural rights theories (of both the right and the left), civil liberties emerge as a right grounded in the property created by autonomous labor, as Shapiro has said. For republicanism, rights are offered only to those who have the propertied foundation for independence, and in Marx, both unfreedom and emancipation are rooted in the original division between labor power and private property in the means of production. In modern sociological theories the trend continues.⁶ T. H. Marshall's classic study of citizenship, for example, documents the growth of citizenship as a product of the developmental logic of private property and its social consequences.⁷ He argues that the needs of the seventeenth-century landed gentry for waged labor on the land and bourgeois demands for mobile property set the motor in gear for the movement toward civil rights. Subsequent contradictions between property relations and the exclusions and inequalities of class kept the engine going. Political citizenship was a product of the nineteenth-century ascendancy of the middle class, while social citizenship came in the twentieth century with the power of the working class.

This approach to property has a long pedigree. It can be found at the heart of the social naturalism of the private sphere from which the growth of the social sciences can be traced.⁸ In eighteenth-century England, for instance, we find William Townsend, a statesman and policy-maker, propounding an apocryphal

allegory about a desert island "society" of "goats" and "dogs" comprised of only two "races"--property owners and laborers--who lived in perfect harmony with each other.⁹ Counter to prevailing political wisdom, however, this naturalistic social utopia would thrive as a self-regulating (private) economy precisely because of the absence of public state interference into the productive sphere. Deprived of poor relief (public welfare) the propertyless would be naturally--that is, harmoniously--driven to labor. Dubbed the "theorem of the goats and dogs," the allegory was widely popularized in the (successful) cause of exhortation to repeal the Elizabethan Poor Laws. Following Locke, however, Townsend does find one purpose for government on his island. Historically-constructed public laws would be needed to protect the propertied from theft by the propertyless.

In Townsend, then, and later in Malthus and Ricardo on whom he was a direct influence, the relationship of property and the private sphere was not only foundational and autonomous, but natural and, metaphorically, biological--in the sense that the classes are so different by nature that the differences among them are like differences among species. And while its crudity has been long surpassed, the fable still highlights the conceptual link between property and political rights. Against the inexorable force of natural law, political forms can be posed as social constructions which will either interfere with the harmony of nature (e.g. the Poor Laws) or which are a necessary complement of that same natural force (e.g. laws to protect property).¹⁰

Two historical periods in particular have played center stage in the story of property's foundational place in liberty and rights-formation. Locke's seventeenth century is of course the first when the landed gentry used their claims to the natural rights of property to demand inclusion in the polity and, when that was consistently denied, to seize power and later to settle on a constitutional monarchy. The second historical period is the second quarter of the nineteenth

century, marked first by the combined struggle of the working and middle classes for the vote--culminating in the limited 1832 Reform Bill-- and subsequently by the massive growth and ultimate defeat of Chartism. This article will focus on these nineteenth-century Chartist claims to political rights and present a counter-foundational approach to the relationship between property and rights. Against the mainstream, I will argue that the private sphere of property--whether in land or in labor--was not perceived to be the precondition for political rights and thus the ultimate protection against public tyranny. By contrast, I will argue that the public realm of social relations and membership was the precondition for what the Chartists and other working people's defined as property in the first place. Part I will address prevailing and recent arguments concerning Chartism and property; Part II will present my alternative conception of the Chartist's political culture of property; and Parts III-V will explore the historical meaning of that culture in the lives of the Chartists' early modern urban and proto-industrial ancestors.

The underlying method of analysis is one which replaces ideas of class formation and interest with that of narrative identity.¹¹ This reflects my effort to find a concept capacious and historically sensitive enough to capture the connectivity of social action. Identities are not formed by interests imputed from a stage of social development (be it pre-industrial or modern), or by "experience" imputed from a social category (such as traditional artisan, factory laborer, or working-class wife), but by a person's "place" in a relational setting comprised of (breakable) rules, (variable) practices and discourses, binding (and unbinding) institutions. This setting must be conceived as a network of temporal and spatial relationships. The concept of narrative identity, therefore, makes action not an event but an episode--one that is shaped by both memory and anticipation. This makes identities both malleable and contested, but nonetheless only intelligible through the narratives of their past. Narrativity also eliminates the notion that

certain actions are rational while others are irrational or "backwards-looking"; the relationships which give meaning, contingency, and historicity to identity have no teleology. Thus the development of identity must be explored over the long term, and the problem of understanding the political meaning of property reposed as a problem of discovering the complexities of narrative identities and political cultures

I. CHARTISM AND RIGHTS-CLAIMS: THE RIGHTS OF PROPERTY IN LABOR?

The Chartist movement of the second quarter of the nineteenth century bears particular significance for political theory. It is well-known that in the face of the 1832 Reform Bill which extended the franchise to the propertied middle-classes, working people lost little time in building Chartism, the first and largest autonomous working-class suffrage movement (roughly 1836-1848). Because this autonomous movement of propertyless working people went down to defeat against Parliament, now widely enlarged by the newly enfranchised middle classes, the conclusions to be drawn regarding property and rights have long confirmed the foundational approach. As an historical exemplar, however, one aspect of the Chartist period remains for historians and theorists especially intriguing. Although no longer allied with the propertied middle classes, this working-class movement continued to justify its claims to suffrage rights on the basis of property--even though, in our current sense of the word, the majority were, of course, propertyless. Until recently there has been one predominant interpretation of this conundrum: the claim to rights was grounded on the assumption that working people were not propertyless, but possessed property in their labor, and thus held equal claim to rights as those who held property in land or capital.

The Chartists who made this claim were part of a small group of "Ricardian Socialists," embracing a kind of proto-marxism focussing squarely on the conflictual relationship between labor and capital. Developed in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, these radicalized versions of the labor theory of value were most clearly expressed in the writings of J. F. Bray, William Thompson, John Gray, and Thomas Hodgskin. The "people's science," as it was called, turned Ricardo on his head by appropriating the concept that labor was the source of all value as a reason for workers to be entitled to rights rather than exposed to a commodified labor market.¹² Following the Marxist variant, some historians have since used these writings to prove that the Chartist movement was in fact a class conscious movement which demonstrated an explicit comprehension that the suffering of working people derived from the point of production and the alienation of their property in labor.

Although this Marxist view had long been challenged by Weberian and neo-Durkeimian perspectives, more recently Gareth Stedman Jones has presented a persuasive and highly influential alternative interpretation of these nineteenth-century working-class claims.¹³ It is one that reads a radical Lockeanism into the popular link between property and rights. Drawing from a revisionist approach to Locke in political theory,¹⁴ Stedman Jones was the first to argue that this radical Lockeanism could be applied to the Chartist period. His main argument was with the long prevalent "social" analyses of Chartism which essentially imputed a socioeconomic causality and meaning to the explicitly political language of the Charter. Using what he defined as a political and linguistic approach to Chartism, he argued that people actually meant what they said. That is, when working people said that the solution to their distress was political--i.e. in winning the vote--it was because the discursive tradition of radical Lockeanism defined social distress as a political problem, namely in the monopoly of political power held by

the ruling political classes, rather than a problem founded in the production process or the alienation of labor. In the words of Chartist O'Brien:

Knaves will tell you that it is because you have no property, you are unrepresented. I tell you on the contrary, it is because you are unrepresented that you have no property...your poverty is the result not the cause of your being unrepresented.¹⁵

Stedman Jones takes us back to the eighteenth-century "Country Party"--an important tradition of disaffected small-holding Tories who challenged the great propertied Whig "Court Party" for the corrupting effects of their political monopoly and those gentry practices of exclusion Tories associated with the settlements of 1688 and 1714.¹⁶ In the 1790s, at the beginning of the Reform Movement, this quasi-populist tradition was transmuted into a plebeian phenomenon; it provided a popular political analysis for ruling class corruption and a constitution-focussed solution centering on the demand for more inclusive political representation.¹⁷ Although most historians had argued that with political repression and industrialization, radicalism had faded and transformed by the 1830s into the beginnings of a truer class consciousness, Stedman Jones argues instead that the Chartist platform and mass appeal can only be explained by the robust continuity of radicalism and its political critique well into the 1840s. Indeed, the rise and fall of Chartism, according to Stedman Jones, can be made much more intelligible by tracking the actual behavior of the English state. After all, if the concentration of Parliamentary power and its legislative consequences were the source of popular distress, it was only logical that the political appeal of radicalism would no longer resonate in the face of actual legislative reform such as the 1847 Factory Legislation, a bill which, although limited, finally met working class demands for a ten hour limit on the working day for women and children.

That it was their property in labor which provided working people with the natural right to political representation is, of course, the Lockean element in this tradition of radicalism. Indeed, a "reasonable" reading of Locke suggests that "as St Paul and Lenin agreed, the man who did not work had no right to eat," it is only working people who have such a natural right.¹⁸ It was precisely such a reading of Locke, channeled through Paine and Cobbett, to which the Chartists held, according to Stedman Jones, citing their belief that the poverty of the working classes was the result of a process of "legal robbery, made possible by the monopoly of law-making" by aristocratic robbers, "parasites" and "idlers" who lived off of wealth that was in truth that of workers themselves. Through political corruption these idlers "reaped" the rewards of workers' labor. Despite being viewed as a threat to the propertied by the propertyless, the Chartists "did not regard the working classes as propertyless. For since the only legitimate source of property was labor, laborers were in possession of the most fundamental form of all property" (pp.108-9). The solution, then, to this problem would not be one aimed at expropriating the means of production. On the contrary, it would be one that focussed on transforming through universal manhood suffrage a corrupt and unfairly exclusive political system in which "all other forms of property were afforded political and legal support, while that of labor was left at the mercy of those who monopolized the state and the law."¹⁹

In this reading of Chartism, Stedman Jones launched a significant critique of the socio-centrism which had been characteristic of political analysis in nineteenth-century social history. It is one which gives the workers back their own words and their own lives. For all the strengths and contributions of his revisionism, however, in its fundamentals his reading is still firmly grounded in a familiar epistemological tradition; that in which property as a foundational natural object assumes the role of a private buttress against public tyranny by

legitimizing political rights.²⁰ If his reading of political monopoly, for example, is correct, it is still only the proximate cause of distress; the ultimate source of political monopoly would have to be in the distinction contemporaries made between landed and other sorts of property. According to the power-holders only fee simple landed and real property guaranteed political rights, while the Chartists contested with the equally foundational claim that since labor is the natural source of all property, nature demands that laborers should be included in Parliament. Stedman Jones still attributes the political meaning of Chartist claims to their possession of property in labor.

II. CHARTISM AND RIGHTS-CLAIMS: THE RIGHTS OF PROPERTY IN MEMBERSHIP

In this article I want to turn these epistemological premises on their head. All of the variants of the foundational approaches above presuppose that the autonomy of property and the private sphere constitutes the buttress of public freedom. Put another way, they all assume that a people without autonomous property is a people without political rights. I will argue the converse: for the Chartists--indeed for nineteenth-century working people in general--a people without social relationality and public membership was a people without property.²¹ Thus while they indeed relied on property in labor as the basis for their claims to the right of political participation, these nineteenth-century working people nonetheless clearly articulated that their very conception of property was itself founded on the preconditions and practices of socially constructed rights and obligations of public membership, social networks, and institutional association. In this epistemological inversion, the property supporting public rights was not the property of autonomous private labor, but the property of membership. In this we can also read an inverted understanding of the relationship between property and personality. The social identity of freedom and

independence was only proximately derived from the autonomy of property. More fundamentally, it was derived from the rights and obligations of membership on which property itself was founded.

This reading of Chartist claims suggests a very different conception of the terms "property", "labor", "rights", "freedom" and "liberty", and, above all, of that which most embodied their definition of property, namely that of "skilled" and "fair" labor. Skill was articulated as a property by factory workers and artisans alike. But in the social and narrative identities of these working people, skill was only marginally a technical practice--indeed through various extra-relational methods many "unskilled" and "dishonorable" workers had obtained technical ability. More fundamentally, skill referred only to those whose work was rightfully exercised within the bonds and bounds of the strict practices of membership. In practical terms, this meant that a person was skilled only if he or she had served a (formal or informal) apprenticeship; apprenticeship was the process by which the line was demarcated between inclusion and exclusion of membership.²² People were included in the freedoms and rights of the skilled community only if they operated within the largely unwritten but well-understood rules and practices of their trade and only if they maintained the "misteries" of their labor associations.²³

The property of skill was thus a relational practice rather than an individual attribute. Not the capacity to work a trade but the right to do so was endowed by virtue of membership in a skilled community. To ground these abstract arguments about property, labor, and rights, I will briefly revisit the social practices of the Chartists and other contemporary movements. In doing so it should become clear that the right to participate politically (universal suffrage) at both the national and local level was only one of a bundle of liberties that the property of skilled labor was understood to guarantee--others included the

substantive regulation of markets in prices, wages, and commodities, and a necessary link between these freedoms and the cohesion of families and communities. Rather than a "moral economy," however, this bundle of rights tied up with property as membership signified a commitment to a form of regulative liberty as a form of citizenship. For like citizenship, this was a conception of property tied to rights and liberties which were not free floating and natural rights but which were rights connected only with a particular membership in a particular polity of relationships, rules, and obligations.²⁴

During the Chartist era English working people marched peacefully to Parliament and they mobbed unpopular workhouses; they petitioned to retain or reinstitute apprenticeship and wage regulations and they demanded new forms of state intervention into the length of the working day; they tenaciously fought for the right to outdoor poor relief and for local control over its administration and they waged militant strikes; they formed self-help and community based educational organizations and families "huddled" and exercised political influence by boycotting selected merchants; throughout, they linked these practices to the demand for participation in Parliament through universal manhood suffrage.²⁵ Through all these social practices one central narrative ran like a thick thread. Quite simply, this narrative theme was that working people had inviolable rights to a particular political and legal relationship between the people and the law. They claimed these rights through a particular understanding of the law, a particular understanding of the people and their membership in the political community, and a particular conception about the rightful relationship between the people and the law. This conception of rights defined independence and autonomy as inexorably linked to the property rights of working people, but only minimally to the fruits of individual labor. They rested primarily on membership in the political community. Let us first look briefly at each of the two components,

the people and the law, to better understand how they fit together as a single animating principle.

The claims put to the law were composed of three interlocking languages of legal and political rights: one of civil, one of participatory, and the third of substantive and regulative rights. The claim to participatory rights is the one with which we are most familiar. It was salient first in the Reform movement of the 1820s and then in Chartism during the 1830s and 1840s. In their claims for participatory rights, as Stedman Jones has argued, the Chartists ascribed blame for the social inequities and poverty of the working classes to the political "arrangements" of "that house" (Parliament), arrangements which excluded working peoples. The second language was that of substantive justice and the claim to regulative law. It was expressed through the consistent demand for the right, the obligation, and the necessity of laws to regulate markets, whether in labor, commodities, machinery, or currency. These two discourses were joined together by a third, the language of civil rights and independence which assumed that freedom and access to law were rights of all freeborn English people.²⁶ But the critical conjoining thread among the three was the understanding that because laws and rules were the infrastructural elements of the social world, then participatory and substantive legal rights were the pre-conditions of independence and freedom.²⁷ This meant that participatory rights were unequivocally understood to be linked to regulative and redistributive issues; that substantive laws were appealed to not by a deferent lower class seeking paternalism or protection, but in the name of liberty and independence; and--as perhaps the strongest indicator--that the Chartists insisted that regulative laws were not to be administered from central state inspection committees. Without exception, each demand to the state for regulation was complemented by the insistence on local control over the process of implementation. The anti-Poor Law movement, for

example, railed equally against administrative centralization as against the dreaded workhouse, just as the factory movement demanded a local inspectorate against the Chadwick's Benthamite scheme for centralization.²⁸

But just who were "the people"?²⁹ Like the concept of law, the idea of the people had three dimensions: 1) the "people" were freeborn and independent; 2) the "people" were a democratically-conceived group of equal participants; and 3) the "people" were a solidaristic self-regulated community. Incorporating the Lockean notion that free people have a natural right to the independence provided them by their own labor, the first implied that the "people" were all of those who worked a trade honestly, who were not idlers (parasites, placemen, capitalists, and aristocrats), and those who had the right to be independent in the "true" sense of the word, that is, on the basis of property rightfully held in labor.³⁰ Co-existing with this radical Lockeanism, however, was an insistence that membership rules were the key to self-rule. This was a conception of the people based neither on the capacity to work, nor on ownership of property in labor, but on actual engagement in "honest labor," skilled labor, and co-operative labor. The people, in this conception, were those who worked according to membership rules.³¹ The property of labor in this language was not conceived of as an individual attribute but as one consequent on self-regulation among the people. Indeed, the very property that gave people the right to be skilled was the property of a formal or informal apprenticeship. Colluders with a competitive and free labor market were excluded.³² Finally, within this conception of membership and independence, a third language understood the people as those who were equal democratic participants in the practices of self-rule. As Clive Behagg has convincingly documented, an "active form of popular democracy" operated within workshops and trade societies; it found expression in, among other things, trade courts and continually rotating participation in trade responsibilities.³³

What joined together these three conceptions of the people was that they all defined "the people" in relational and exclusionary terms. Social and narrative identities were not derived from roles in production, or in terms of their class "interests", but from social and political relationships. The line between the people and the oppressors was thus not a strictly horizontal one but a circular one which circumscribed those who had a fictitious independence, whether it was the despised independence of wealth gained from depriving working people of their true property in labor or the fraudulent independence of those who broke the rules of co-operation. Just as the condition of the people was explained in part by political exclusion, the basis of exclusion was in turn explained as the deprivation of the people of their rightful property in honorable labor, itself defined, in turn, in exclusionary terms. The vocabulary of exclusion was inseparable from the self-identity of workers as independent property owners in their relational rules of association.

This characterization does not prioritize either a language of class or one of politics. There is no question that a language of class developed from the 1830s on, just as there is no question but that same language identified the state as controlling the levers of social power.³⁴ But most significant is that the language of rights embraced both politics and class; it was the explanatory prism through which class issues and other aspects of social distress were mediated and made sense. Rights-claims were thus political in the broadest sense--they established the claim to empowerment deriving not only from constitutional and "natural" rights, but from community cohesion and autonomy in membership. Because they conjoined artisanal conceptions of property-based citizenship rights, these rights-claims also conjoined our usually separate notions of social and political rights. Rights-bearing identities included class rights as one part of a bundle of rights

attached to political membership under law; they combined social power, politics, individual rights, and membership.³⁵

Thus the prevailing public narrative of the Chartists, and the plot-line by which it was configured, was that of a political culture of rights.³⁶ The history and projected future of this rights culture was the theme through which events were evaluated, explained, and given meaning.³⁷ The political culture of English working people was based upon political rights, obligations, and rules--rules of law and rules among the people--not upon a conception of their place or function in the sphere of production. I am not asserting that this political culture had nothing to do with Locke. Rather I want to show how radical Lockeanism was over-determined by a far more deeply institutionalized and highly adaptable set of practices which long preceded Locke and which endured in protean form well into the twentieth-century. Let us now explore the narrative identities and relational settings of the Chartists' ancestors.

III. RURAL-INDUSTRIALIZATION: THE CHARTISTS ANCESTRY

The recent body of literature on proto-industrialization would seem to have especially far-reaching importance for understanding nineteenth-century working-class identities since we now know that it was from these regions of rural-industrial concentration that the "industrial revolution" and its working peoples emerged. Although the existence and continual growth of English domestic industry in the countryside from as early as the thirteenth century has long been recognized, the renamed concept of "proto-industrialization" or "industrialization before industrialization" has now moved rural-industry to center stage in the analysis of Western European industrialization. The new model, most notably associated with Franklin Mendels, Rudolph Braun, Hans Medick, Peter Kriedte, et.al., and Chuck Tilly, has large aims (in its more clearly Marxist version, it

purports to be no less than the most recent contribution to the extended debate over the transition from feudalism to capitalism), and has had wide influence in revising ideas of economic and social development.³⁸ Not surprisingly it has generated a small academic revolution in its theoretical challenge to the conventional causal arguments and periodization of European development.³⁹ No one who speaks of textile work in the rural areas of Western Europe before the nineteenth century can refer to this mode of production in the quaint old terms of the "putting-out industry", "cottage industry", or the "domestic system" without either adopting or explicitly rejecting the new term.⁴⁰ And since we now know that the industrial villages of the early nineteenth-century sprouted from the labors and lands of proto-industrial families, we can now ask: to what extent can the narrative identities of the Chartists now be understood as a product of an earlier period of proletarianization and propertylessness?

The model's central claim is that industrialization was ultimately successful thanks to the proletarianization of pre-nineteenth-century rural-industrial families. These putting-out working families are said to have comprised the first "modern" labor market, that is, they were subjected to a free and unregulated labor market which operated not according to "traditional" institutional restraints of family, feudalism, and guild, but according to the logic of the new non-institutional self-regulating economic mechanism of supply and demand. The exposure to a waged-labor market posed new and great dangers to rural-industrial, previously peasant, families. Harvest failures, the volatile international market, the wage-price scissors crunch, and dependence upon middlemen and merchant capitalists all threatened to corrode community and family life and to undermine any security in livelihood.

The proto-industrial theory depends upon three propositions about the lives and livelihoods of the ancestors of nineteenth-century industrial working people.

First, the core of most explanations for the development of rural industry is that it was the absence of skilled labor practices (or the presence of what economists call the "elasticity of labor") that attracted merchants in the first place to areas outside the regulative reach of urban guilds and skilled workers. Second, proto-industrial theorists have readily followed Adam Smith's lead in assuming that little if any technical skill was necessary for the weaving and spinning of textiles. Since textile work did not require technical skill, employers hired unskilled women and children whose cheap labor, he argued, was one of the reasons for the economic success of rural-industrial textile production. And third, rural-industrial workers were completely without self-defensive organizational resources. Analysts following the Webbs' History of Trade Unionism have rejected any possible links between guilds, rural labor disputes, and nineteenth-century industrial trade unions; they label earlier appearances of labor conflict "primitive" and "ephemeral," lacking the continuity that fortifies organization.⁴¹ Accordingly, they do not discern the economic preconditions for true organization until the industrial revolution.

Yet English evidence from the countryside challenges the proto-industrial theory. This evidence points to notable labor market power, restrictive practices, the highest European rural-industrial wages, and an extraordinary capacity to use the law to the advantage of working peoples.⁴² In England's textile communities (in contrast to agricultural regions) this evidence suggests that clothworkers were not defenseless to a free labor market or the perils of self-exploitation. There is also considerable evidence to suggest that in English textile communities (this time in contrast to rural-industrial workers in Continental regions) clothworkers displayed a striking capacity for regulative intervention into the labor market and an impressive--although, to be sure, not invincible--capacity to counter the threats of a free labor market. Although outside of the regulated urban guilds, it appears

they nonetheless were able to restrict entry to their trade by regulating the acquisition of skills necessary to work in textile production. Although without formal organization, they were able to prevent fellow workers from accepting "unfair" wages. Although without representatives, they often seized the advantage over employers by demanding higher wages and restricting labor supply in times of labor demand. And although without unions, they were able to provide social security relief for each other in order to prevent the drive of hunger from forcing fellow workers to accept low wages during trade slumps.⁴³ In fact, rather than wage labor signalling the triumph of an unregulated labor market, powerful regulative practices appear to have been a major force in shaping the nature of English rural-industrial labor relations. Through restrictive and regulative practices, rural-industrial artisans exercised a competing and countervailing set of rules over and against the "rules" of the free labor market--the supply-demand-wage-price mechanism--of the merchant capitalist employers.

Restrictive labor practices, community empowerment, occupational monopolies, and organized rules among the rural industrial labor force? Surely such practices are those we associate with skilled artisanal workers. How are we to explain such a pattern among a "propertyless" and fully "proletarianized" community? One answer points to the empirical limitations of the theory. For example, the exclusive utilization of unskilled women and children by rural-industrial employers was not nearly as universal as either Adam Smith or the theorists of proto-industrialization have suggested. David Levine writes that rural-industry was "dependent upon the artisanal mode in which the arduously accumulated skills of the craftsman, not the authority of the employer, were the pre-eminent determinants of the method and pace of work." Successful production was therefore not built upon technological complexity and fixed capital, but rather on the "craftsman's experience, intellect, skill, diligence and training." This

presents a picture of an independent worker who forced employers to accept the "high cost of craftsmen" in the production process. These judgments are supported by Sidney Pollard's findings that rural-industry developed successfully primarily in those regions notable for the local build-up of skills. Buchanan Sharp, referring to the seventeenth-century, also rejects the idea that textile work was by-employment, insisting instead on the "artisanal status" of rural clothworkers.⁴⁴

But this addresses only one aspect of the problem. The attempt to fully understand the regulative capacities of rural-industrial peoples takes us to the serious limitations of the proto-industrial model, especially its theoretical and methodological premises.⁴⁵ For all of the breadth of its argument and analytic power, the entire causal sequence of explanation hinges upon the single lynch pin of the "free" and totally unregulated character of the rural-industrial labor market. This, however, is an example of what Karl Polanyi has called "the economic fallacy," namely, the assumption that economic relations are prior to and hence analytically discrete from institutional and social relationships.⁴⁶ Economic sociology can provide an important alternative framework for analyzing rural-industrial labor markets. The approach involves analyzing labor relations not through abstract "economic" functions, but as "an instituted process" of interactive rules and cultural, rather than abstract, relations. In economic sociology we do not ask whether markets exist within institutional boundaries, but instead, of what nature are the institutional and cultural frameworks of the market and what are the different effects of these frameworks in actual historical practice? Economic sociology assumes that all labor relations are structured through contested rules of authority, and rights and obligations in regard to the productive use of persons and things.⁴⁷ The challenge is to understand empirically the impact of those rules, rights, and obligations. Only this will help

us to understand the lives of the rural-industrial predecessors to those nineteenth-century workers who comprised the ranks of the Chartists.

When rural-industrial workers are described as a defenseless proletarianized labor force, it is against the base-line of the regulated urban guilds that they are being compared. Theorists of proto-industrialization argue that it was precisely because urban artisanal guild workers were able to control and restrict labor relations that merchant capitalists sought out and created a free labor market from impoverished families outside the guilds in the rural countryside. But the importance of understanding more fully the dynamics of this putatively defenseless rural labor market directs us to take a closer and comparative look at the regulative power of the guilds. In doing so, we will discover that it was neither the urban locale nor the division of labor that gave guild workers their bargaining power. Rather, they had bargaining power because of three institutional and cultural foundations on which their regulative practices were based: 1) the law--guild law, urban and mercantile law, and state law; 2) participation in local governance; and 3) the capacity to enforce strict self-discipline and cooperation among guild members themselves--again a power rooted not in the artisanal division of labor but in the nature of the social relations among artisanal workers themselves.⁴⁸ I will first explore these institutional surroundings in which urban labor markets were embedded in order to contrast them to those of the rural-industrial countryside. After so doing, I will make the strong and controversial case that English rural-industrial communities were the only ones among European countries that had functionally similar institutional foundations,⁴⁹ and thus that alone among European rural-industrial families, English clothworkers had the capacity to maintain a significant degree of regulative power over their labor markets. It was this unique capacity which goes a far way to explain the

nature of the political claims and expectations later expressed by their Chartist progeny.

IV. URBAN ROOTS OF ARTISANAL PROPERTY IN SKILL

In popular lore, medieval and early modern cities are most renowned for having been a refuge for personal liberty in an age of arbitrary feudal power and insecurity. "A year and a day" was the customary amount of "city-air" an escaped serf needed to gain freedom from a manorial lord. But equally important as this negative liberty of the freed serf was the positive liberty of citizenship rights to which a surprising number of the population laid claim. Not just elites and bourgeois merchants, but numerous artisans as well "possessed" the freedom of the city and hence the rights of citizenship--the right to law (civil), the right to participate (political), and the right to livelihood (social). This freedom, moreover, was a form of property; it was possessed by those who held rights to its claim. The hallmark of these urban "freedoms" were their rooting in the property of membership.⁵⁰ How did this property develop and why did so many urban working people have relatively broad rights long before their "proper" structural cause?

The answer lies in the place of the guild in the urban political culture.⁵¹ In a process of struggle lasting almost half a century, guilds battled local elites of merchants and authorities and eventually won both official recognition and notable power in local governance. The triumph occurred in 1319 by Royal Charter under King Edward II: all "inhabitants to be admitted [into the freedom] shall be of some mistry..."; anyone seeking to obtain the freedom who did not belong to a guild "shall then only be admitted with full assent of the commonality assembled".⁵² In translation, that meant that to become a citizen one had to enter into or "possess" the "freedom" of the town or city. Yet entry to the

freedom and thus to citizenship could only be achieved through membership in a guild (the mystery).⁵³ Thus was forged a mighty bond between guild membership and citizenship. It was not the division of labor or the mode of production that shaped artisanal rights and created this political culture. Rather it was the political culture of the guild which gave artisans' access to the public sphere of citizenship. In order to make sense of this it is necessary to reconstruct the practices and institutions of that political culture, its civil rules and codes of membership. For therein lay its power.

In a medieval and early modern town more was required for a skilled artisan to ply the trade than knowledge of a technical skill. To practice the "arte and mystery" of a craft required guild membership. Only members of a guild could legally practice their craft in a town, but guild membership in turn required the possession of a crucial kind of property--the property of an apprenticeship.⁵⁴ Apprenticeship, of course, is generally thought of as period of training for a skill, but the meaning of an apprenticeship was not primarily in its technical training. Seven years was the standard time required to serve as an apprentice but at the end of the service the artisan did not "leave behind" the apprenticeship. Only in part did it represent the journeyman's training and investment of time. More significantly, the credential of an apprenticeship signified the new "ownership" of a set of social and political relations and connections, a guaranteed place in a network of attachments, as well as all the rights and obligations consequent to those attachments. The apprenticeship now became the artisan's "property"--a permanent credential belonging to the artisan guaranteeing benefits as long as these were exercised within the guild. This was not mobile property that attached to the individual crafts person.⁵⁵ The property acquired during an apprenticeship was in fact the property of social membership; the exercise of apprenticeship rights

was thus predicated on the practice and maintenance of institutionalized social relations.

The key to this relational conception of property is in the original English word for skill. The word is mistry, as in the "arte and mistry of weaving." One reason skill was a mistry was because knowledge of a craft was viewed as a specialized and symbolic secret that should take time and trust to acquire.⁵⁶ But mistry had another meaning and use that prevailed over the first: a mistry was also the medieval word for the craft guild itself, the social body, the fellowship, the corporate and instituted group.⁵⁷ Unlike the word skill which is singular and individual, mistry was simultaneously individual and corporate. To possess the mistry was to simultaneously "possess" knowledge and membership.⁵⁸ By contrast, in modern social science and economics, skill is defined as "human capital," a technical capacity which provides economic power to an individual. But in the political culture of the guild an "unskilled" worker was not defined as such because he or she was technically incompetent. Indeed, through a wide array of illegal practices many "unskilled" workers, in fact, were technically trained. The definition of an "unskilled", "dishonorable", and "illegal" worker was one who worked without the property of an apprenticeship, that is, who worked without a mistry, without relational obligations, without the bounds and the bonds of association, and without the political culture of membership. The attachments of membership, not training or ability alone, conferred legality and the property of skill.⁵⁹

The property of apprenticeship and skill was therefore a form of cultural capital. It was a social and cultural "mistry," not a technical or individual attribute. At the end of the service, the crafts-person (now a journeyman) was taken through a public ceremony in which he or she swore by oath to follow the guild's rules and obligations.⁶⁰ With that oath the artisan was entitled and

obligated to the connections and the powers embodied in the property of apprenticeship. This included citizenship, livelihood, employment, mutual aid, religious life, social organizations--indeed an entire cradle to grave culture, as well as the mandate to participate in public ceremonial processions and "mystery plays" which affirmed the political identity of membership.⁶¹

Relationality thus turned out to be the key to the city; apprenticeship was the medium. But it is also crucial to recognize that the relationality of the guild's political culture did not conform to the ideal-typical one of a "gemeinschaft" community. Rather, the purpose of the property of membership was precisely to provide the foundations for real independence and liberties.⁶² The prominent emphasis among artisans on independence and autonomy suggests the importance of distinguishing the normative from the institutional conception of relationality. The right to the freedom of practicing one's skill, as well as that of citizenship, achieved the goal of individual empowerment. But this empowerment only had viability when rooted in the institutional foundations of attachments and membership. Only the possession of membership allowed for individual empowerment and the meaningful exercise of rights. Clearly the practices of relationality were matched by those of exclusion, thus preventing citizenship rights from being automatically conferred upon all people. But this is the important point: among "the people" those included and excluded (including gender exclusion) were based less on class divisions or land ownership than on the political contingencies and powers of membership.

V. RURAL-INDUSTRIALIZATION, PROPERTY, AND SKILL

On the face of it, these urban practices would seem to have little to do with rural-industrial labor markets and livelihoods. After all, it was precisely to avoid this political culture of skill and property that merchants capitalists sought out the

rural countryside. But to accept this proposition is to assume exactly that which economic sociology urges us to question--namely the very possibility that economic relations and labor markets can ever operate outside of any cultural and institutional environment. English rural-industrial labor markets, contrary to this assumption, most assuredly did not exist outside of any institutional framework. In fact, through different means rural-industrial communities existed within a political culture functionally parallel to that of the urban guilds. I have considered the first two institutional foundations elsewhere.⁶³ In this final section I will concentrate on the third--the rural-industrial possession of property in membership on which an essential part of their political culture was grounded.

We have seen that the regulative labor power of guild workers in large part was dependent upon the networks of association among members themselves. What this presupposed, however, and what the enforcement of sanctions required, was the continuity of an independent and self-disciplined community. Independent, because the community had to be free from potentially countervailing elite sanctions and rules. And self-disciplined, because workers chose the public relations of the laboring community over private interests whether through apprenticeship, "fair" and "just" wage levels, or participation in formal and informal mutual social security associations. Recall that the right to acquire skill--and so to have the "attributes" necessary for employment--was the result of an individual's inclusion and rootedness within the community that controlled the right to be trained. A skilled community, therefore was a particular kind of community. It was one that conferred independence upon the working person--we can think of it as a "willed community" rather than a "traditional community"--and it certainly did not preclude, but negotiated with, commodity and labor markets.⁶⁴ The independence of the willed community was not based on the freedom of the individual labor contract, but on the freedom

gained by the exercise of rights and expectations, of public and relational protection against private economic power. Through the individual's alliance with a set of social and public relationships, skill and independence became rights of membership. The network or community of the skilled was the precondition for restrictive labor market practices.

If rural-industrial workers were also able to exercise such practices, it must be explained by the political and institutional relationships of their communities. But we must be careful not to make the mistake of looking for evidence of "proto-bureaucracies." The Webbs' approach suffered from an excessive formalism; as long as they were looking for something which resembled modern unions, they surely could not find it in rural-industrial countryside. If we turn their arguments inside out, however, a different proposition can be considered. Regulative power was not the cause, but the result, of workers' association. This allows us to consider textile communities from a different perspective. It was not formal trade unionism that created workers' association, but the reverse: by maintaining relationality over time and space, English rural clothworkers were able to organize without formal guilds. As in the case of urban skilled artisans, this regulative solidarity was contingent upon community institutions and practices of association which promoted the power of sanction and the conferring of collective rights. Like urban skilled artisans, rural-industrial textile workers negotiated with market forces through cohesive political association. Association preceded organization; indeed, it was its foundation. Yet a question still remains. Association required the continuity of a settled population, and such continuity cannot be taken for granted in the face of the potentially corrosive impact of the market. It is not enough to explain association by relying on gemeinschaft notions of "habit", or to claim that association was a "natural...part of the life of the community".⁶⁵ The

capacity for association or community cannot be invoked or assumed; it must be explained.⁶⁶

To understand the capacity for association, it is the relational "infrastructure" of rural-industrial life that must be the subject of analysis.⁶⁷ English textile communities differed from agricultural communities in the conditions and rules in their communities. Along two axes English rural textile communities resembled urban communities: 1) in the degree of spatial and political independence from authority; and 2) in the degree of self-regulated co-operation among each other. Along the first axis, rural industrial communities had both a relatively less powerful, smaller, and more diffused manorial presence as well as an employer class which did not live locally. These communities, therefore, enjoyed greater collective independence than did agrarian communities. And along the second axis, textile communities had more tightly regulated kin relationships. These two interrelated characteristics combined to create the sociological hybrid of self-regulating independent communities which linked independence not to freedom from the public sphere but to public participation, self-rule, and membership rules binding people to each other.

Among the several factors that supported rural-industrial life was the ownership of a kind of property with which we should now be familiar--the property of skill. By making the possession of skill a prerequisite for fair employment, rural-industrial workers were able, in large part, to control the right to enter the labor market through the careful distribution of skill. The acquisition of skill, however, was not simply available for the taking. Apprenticeship was still the principal means by which this right was both conferred and sustained. Adam Smith understood well the importance of apprenticeship when in 1776 he railed against it as a restraint upon competition among the labor force, and because it led to workers' combinations which "reducing the whole manufacture into a sort of

slavery to themselves" raised the price of their labor "much above what is due to the nature of their work."⁶⁸ Just as with urban apprenticeship, rural apprenticeship required of the young person a mandatory seven years of association with an adult worker. It was intended to prevent people from acting out of individual interest and to check the balance of employer demand over worker supply by restricting the numbers of available working people. Preventing gluts of labor by controlling entry was only one of the benefits of apprenticeship. Through apprenticeship the customs of the trade were passed on and preserved, and the practice became part of the "school of public life" in which rights and obligations were taught and given renewed life.⁶⁹ Those who violated these became "unskilled" and "unfair" workers. Skilled working people were not skilled because they had been apprenticed; they were apprenticed only because they were already "skilled", which is to say, participants in a network of social relations that practiced obligation and exclusion.

Apprenticeship was not only a right of participation in the collectivity; it was also in no uncertain terms conceived of as a property right. Where Smith viewed apprenticeship as a violation of the "most sacred and inviolable" property which every man had in his own labor, skilled workers viewed the right that a formal or informal apprenticeship conferred upon them as the true kind of property--the kind defined by the social relations and the institutional association of which they were a part.⁷⁰ Thus, one weaver claimed in defense of the practice: "The weaver's qualifications may be considered as his property and support. It is as real property to him as buildings and land are to others. Like them his qualification cost time, application and money"...as well as by "the care and purchase of their parents and friends".⁷¹ This property right, moreover, was sanctioned by the state. English rural-industrial workers were not excluded from regulative policies; the 1563 Statute of Artificers made apprenticeship a national

legal right throughout town and country. But--and this is crucial--the state was only codifying an existing practice and institution which long predated and in fact informed the Act of 5 Elizabeth. Thus, while it was an essential by-law of all guild and chartered companies, apprenticeship was no less deeply embedded in the strictly regulated networks and by-laws of the rural-industrial countryside and the textile villages where it was a long-established custom. Accordingly, when defending the putatively inviolate customary status of the threatened law in 1814, craftspeople would frequently cite the legal definition of custom in claiming that apprenticeship had been a right of working people "from time, to the contrary whereof the memory of man runneth not."⁷²

The right to become skilled by means of an apprenticeship was thus a right given only to those already included in associated networks. In cities, the guilds determined who was to be included. But in the absence of formal urban guilds, the question must arise as to what could play the same role of defining who was to be included and who was to be excluded from the right to apprenticeship?

The rural-industrial family was the guild of the countryside. In the 1970s and 80s, building on the pathbreaking work of earlier scholars such as Ivy Pinchbeck and Alice Clark, scholars developed an influential "household economics" theory to address the relationship between the family and early capitalist development.⁷³ The household economics approach begins from a set of Marxist assumptions about the logic of capitalist production. The chief one concerns the transmutation of potentially resistant workers into "factors of production." Applied to proto industry, this assumption points to the commodification of the family unit by the process of capitalization in the countryside. Most important to this claim is the assumption of the propertyless condition of these family units. Without ownership of production it is assumed that the family had no resources to resist total exploitation. In contrast to the

militancy of an organized urban artisanry, rural industrial families are thus portrayed principally as powerless victims to the invincible logic of accumulation. But there is a different angle of vision from which to view the relationship between the rural-industrial family and textile production for a waged labor market. This perspective would begin with the "logic" of the family itself.

Rural cloth-workers were the progenies of earlier peasant families who tenaciously practiced partible inheritance in the pastoral regions of England. Dividing the land among heirs ensured generational bonding over time and space and so institutionalized in inheritance patterns the rights and obligations of social security and family cohesion. When early modern rural families confronted the new conditions of rural-industrial production and the potential threats of an open labor market, this "logic" of partibility was not superseded by the logic of accumulation. Instead, the pastoral cum-rural-industrial family flexibly transformed the rights that land inheritance guaranteed to a new form of inheritance adapted to the new conditions: it converted the rights of partible inheritance into the rights of the inheritance of skill. This conversion explains the rural-industrial family's jealous control over its power to confer apprenticeship: as long as children were dependent upon the acquisition of apprenticeship to enter on fair terms the associated laboring collectivity, they were equally bound to their families. The practice of transmitting and distributing skills among children served, like the practice of partible inheritance, as a transgenerational trust.

Because it established the boundaries of social inclusion, membership in a family was the prerequisite for apprenticeship. In a process comparable to guilds, (and guilds were originally nothing more than households), clothworking families regulated and distributed apprenticeships.⁷⁴ It all looked deceptively simple and natural: apprenticeships were usually carried out in the home where both father and mother instructed their children, in a neighbor's or relative's home, or even in

a small workshop.⁷⁵ In rural-industrial regions, family continuity in the trade was the rule. Parentally-trained children worked in the family home until they either inherited it or set up their own when they married; their parents were likely to help them purchase their own looms. Weaving, for example, was always taught to children by a parent or sibling:

My mother taught me (while too young to weave) to earn my bread carding and spinning cotton, winding linen or cotton weft for my father and elder brothers at the loom, until I became of sufficient age and strength for my father to put me into a loom.⁷⁶

What appears simple, however, was, in fact, a matter of strict regulation and sanction: through its control of apprenticeship, the family was the critical link which both protected the community as a whole from the dangers of unskilled individual labor contracts (an open labor market) and protected the individual from the social exclusion resulting from working without an apprenticeship. With membership in the associated laboring community as the precondition of individual and collective independence, and with apprenticeship the chief symbol of that membership, the family's control over apprenticeship established the family as the heart of the regulative process. Threatened with the potentially corrosive impact of a wage labor market, apprenticeship became the glue of the rural-industrial family's cohesion. The right to apprenticeship, like the right to land, was an institutional relationship. And like all institutional relationships with any binding power, it was composed of a right and an obligation: apprenticeship conferred the right to full membership in the laboring community while it simultaneously obliged the child to the family. This generational bonding over time was as essential for the parents as for the young. It ensured support for parents when their old age significantly reduced their earning power.⁷⁷

But rights and obligations need sanctions to work effectively. Like the ownership of land, the "ownership" of the "property" of apprenticeship was an

entitlement that was conditional upon fulfilling family and community obligations. Because the right to the property of industrial skill required familial bonding, the sanction and the expectation of apprenticeship maintained familial cohesion and stability. One could not go out and simply buy an apprenticeship; apprenticeships were available only to those already within the family system. As a social right, it could only be acquired through the networks of inheritance and familial transmission. Apprenticeship was thus a thoroughly relational idiom. It was both acquired in the first place through the relationships, the rights, and the duties of family membership; and it was only useful as an institutional relationship, to entitle the owner to the right of inclusion in the working community.

If the loss of land threatened to loosen parental control over children,⁷⁸ the transmission of skill came to substitute for land with an equally iron-like grip and maintained the geographical stability of rural-industrial villages.⁷⁹ Unlike children in agricultural regions, children of rural-industrial families did not normally leave home for service in another household.⁸⁰ Instead they stayed at home to serve their apprenticeship. And when rural-industrial children did leave home after apprenticeship to set up their own households, they did not go far. Even among those who moved, it was rarely more than fifteen miles from the place of birth. Marriage partners were usually from the immediate area and families entrenched themselves by spreading out in their regions so that networks of families, kin, and kindred could absorb and redistribute resources. What mobility did take place, moreover, was orchestrated through networks of kin, former workers, or neighbors, and "extended" families of lodgers, neighbors, and kin were so common in these households that they have been described as "eating up labour".

Family practices had a direct impact on social relations in the community at large producing a denser network of kinship ties-- hence community-wide rights

and obligations--than in the non- textile regions.⁸³ The density of actual blood kinship relations varied across rural communities and there was a significantly higher amount of kinship connection among people in the rural-industrial community at large. This is not difficult to explain: because they produced more children, and because these children tended to stay within their immediate place of birth, it is not surprising that over time rural-industrial communities would have denser kinship networks. Denser kinship relationships among people promoted stronger social sanctions and interdependent expectations of rights and obligations than among non-blood related neighbors. They reinforced the distribution of skills, regulated the level of acceptable wages, and countered the pull of hunger by providing alternative sources of livelihood to those of "illegal" wages. The consequences were likely to be swift and direct for those who violated kinship pressures, most likely the severing of the social relations on which individual survival was based. But the normal sanctions of kinship ties more than likely preempted many violations even before they happened.

While clothworking families thus imposed their own cohesive practices against the corrosive impact of the labor market, these practices were not, however, geared towards familial isolation from the working community at large. Woven into the fibers of intra-familial relationships, apprenticeship throughout the wider community was equally "woven into the fabric of domestic industry" in all of the rural-industrial regions.⁸⁴ Familial practices of apprenticeship set the standard (if not always the reality) for a closed labor market in the older textile regions of the West Country, East Anglia, the West Riding but also in Lancashire's newest cotton regions where apprenticeship was formally excluded from Eliz 5. Community control over apprenticeship was usually much stronger than that of formal law and a fully competitive labor market was hard pressed to "take off" even in the nation's number one growth industry of cotton.

Apprenticeship was the chief emblem of participatory rights in the labor community. It denoted initiation in and commitment to the common ethics and obligations of that community, and it conferred the right to independence characteristic of skilled labor.

Family practices were also at the heart of self-regulation in work. The family basis of labor supported a structure of production that depended upon coordination, cooperation, and mutual interdependence. Because rural textile production operated on a domestic basis, it is often thought to have been a non-disciplined, almost idiosyncratic activity that took place in spurts. But even when compared to the more notorious aspects of early factory discipline, the degree of anomie among rural-industrial working people has been greatly exaggerated.⁸⁵ Mutual interdependence was necessary to rural-industrial production, and the familial and community bases of production ensured the enforcement of this interdependency. Mutual interdependence in work relations began in the family itself. As a unit of labor, the family was observed to have been like a disciplined machine made up of interconnected parts. This was so pronounced in the domestic textile industry that in the Napoleonic wars, the government was reluctant to conscript family members out of concern that the disruption to family units of production would be of greater damage to the productive capacity of the nation than the military benefits.⁸⁶ Women and children did not de-skill the workforce. On the contrary, the interdependency of the working unit reinforced the skilled practices of association.

Coordination and cooperation not only characterized a single producing family but also integrated the multiple family units in the rural-industrial community. The division of labor could be quite elaborate within rural-industrial chains of producing units; transforming the pace of work at one of the junctions created a ripple effect throughout the "controlled chain of production."⁸⁷

Employers tried to take advantage of this by speeding production demands of individual units, but were faced with a deeper coordination among the laboring community. The subcontracting among workers enforced a similar coordination. That weavers had to rely on numerous spinners for their yarn, although often creating tensions, also supported coordination. Family cohesion and the structure of production were thus complementary processes.

The direct link between family practices and the regulation of the labor supply of the larger community was forged through the currency of a political culture of membership. The rightful and "fair" membership in the networks of textile working families which apprenticeship demanded was an induction into the social experience of the community.⁸⁸ To violate these values in favor of individual gain was in these terms an absolute loss; to be deprived of the asppcoatopm was a total deprivation. That dishonor and enforced isolation befell one who took on work as an "illegal", who accepted lower than customary wages under the temptation of unemployment, who refused to support a strike or to give mutual assistance to a fellow worker may well have been experienced as group tyranny. But that cooperation in the ethics of regulative solidarity was identified by contemporaries as a right and a freedom is not in doubt.

The picture of rural-industry my argument offers is as different from the picture presented in the proto-industrialization model as my picture of community independence is from the gemeinschaft models of traditional communities. Theories of proto-industrialization substitute merchant capitalist wealth for landed wealth as the labor market mechanism shaping society, and argue that because they lived beyond the bounds of urban regulated guilds, rural producers were unorganized and overpopulated and thus defenseless victims of the market forces of supply and demand. If the proto-industrialization theory is correct, the rural-industrial community should have been utterly corroded by the capitalization of

the countryside. But the wage-labor market was itself confronted by the strength of institutional relationality and social networks. The bundle of rights and obligations embodied in apprenticeship--the relationality bound up in the right to the property of skill--were a formidable force against any inherent logic of capital production.

CONCLUSION

We have seen many social practices in action; but can we identify a logic to them? In many ways they appear to be a jumble of incompatible ideas. The notion that individual freedom was rooted in social and institutional relationships is incompatible with foundational ideas which locate freedom in the private realm of an individual's right to freedom from the tyranny of the public sphere--the group, the despot, the church, or the community. The "customs of the trade" were surely part of the lexicon of the "traditional craftsman", and so seem oddly cloaked in the modern language of liberty, freedom, and rights. Apprenticeship is another "traditional" idea that may fit with pre-industrial society before the age of new model unionism,⁸⁹ but which seems incompatibly linked with the idea of property right. Wage demands, on the other hand, are surely modern demands that seem out of place with the more traditional ideas of solidarity (it was E.P. Thompson who spoke of the transition from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century as one reflected in the transition in demands from the "bread nexus" to the "wage nexus").⁹⁰ And finally the principle of freedom in associations seems equally odd: traditional (urban) guilds are identified with mutual associations, but the redistribution of wages and the inter-local alliances of these rural-industrial textile workers seem distinctly like the modern "citizen wage" of the welfare state. We may have identified the connections among skill, property, and rights but have we unraveled their meaning?

The relationship among these activities strongly suggests that livelihoods did not depend on the reproduction or even the ownership of productive processes; rather, livelihood was constituted through the rules of social networks and their political cultures. The property of membership and the rights it endowed reflected the inseparable connection between individual freedom and participatory embeddedness within the ties of social relations. Freedom and independence--both of which were highly valued and articulated goals of Chartists--were thus not conceived as "freedom from" the community, the family, the state, or the law. On the contrary, freedom, independence, even property itself, was explicitly linked to the relationship of the individual to the variety of ways that institutional relationships were expressed.

Nineteenth-century workers who were to fill the rank and file of the Chartist movement brought with them this political culture of property, rights, and membership--one at odds with the ideas of liberal, Marxist, and communitarian theories which have long dominated theories of class formation. In their political culture, to maintain skill was to maintain the associated and regulative character of the working community, to maintain its capacity for association. The aim was to prevent the metaphorical separation of each person's public associations--of family, of kin, of community, of the public--from the individual person's private wage contract. For if the associated character of skill preserved independence, the reverse was also true: detachment led to free agency, competition, and labor glutting through "deskilling"--in short, to collective discontinuity. The degree to which textile workers saw wage levels as a means of corporate mutuality is a lucid example of the simultaneity of "modern" waged labor relations and "traditional" corporate solidarity. Wage demands are viewed by many sociologists as "reformist" demands indicating an acceptance of modern capitalism, the modern market and its ancillary social attributes--primarily that of

self-interest. "Traditional" behavior, on the other hand, is supposed to be "qualitative"; traditional workers allegedly focus on non-monetary forms of moral solidarity. Neither of these presuppositions can account for the relationship between a waged labor market and the co-operative use of wages on the part of the workers. The explanation is simple: wage demands in the interest of relationality reflected the flexible readjustment of a collective identity based on association to the reality of waged labor. A waged labor market did not fragment and corrode the community of producers into abstract free agents divested of their sociality; nor did that community only "look backward" to a non-market and non-waged system of labor relations. In a world where production was primarily one of wage labor, association required harnessing the currency of the cash-nexus. Wage levels, to be sure, were central issues, but in a non-utilitarian context they were "citizen wages."

One of the results of this approach is thus a highly revised conception of property. The classical paradigm considers property to be a matter of ownership derived from autonomous labor; as such it is conceived in terms of a relationship between individual persons and things, whether the thing is land or the fruits of labor. Conversely, the absence of material property is correlated with proletarianization and powerlessness. But a deeper exploration into the Chartists' political culture reveals that for them property was not a "thing." Rather a property (propriety = one's own relations) was a network of relationships among persons, and between persons, institutions, and the larger public sphere. It was not property that caused political rights; it was the political culture of membership that produced property, and the rights of property were expressed through the cultural capital of membership rights. Property could take the form of land, the house, or most importantly, of skill. But regardless of its form, its meaning was relational. The rights of property in effect only existed within the

context of institutional relationships and the political culture of which they were a part. Beginning in the seventeenth century, this relational concept of property was forced to compete with a newly developed idea of liberty based solely on the individual rights of property produced from autonomous labor. Since then these Lockean ideas of natural rights have dominated the social history of politics.⁹¹ But not only did the former public conception of rights and freedom prove remarkably robust in its competition with Locke's ideas; arguably, it was more significant in shaping modern popular conceptions of and claims to political rights.

Finally, I want to argue that this study suggests a radical amendment to a common thread underlying recent historiographical and sociological moves to abandon economic relations and instead to concentrate principally on culture, discourse, and ideology. These revisions have been invaluable. Paradoxically however, they have often had the unintended consequence of reinforcing (by neglect) the "economism" of social history. Stressing culture or even politics as separate spheres from the economy leaves intact the fiction that markets are self-regulating, autonomous systems. It locates labor and property and material life on one side, and cultural and political concerns on the other. But the challenge to the "economistic fallacy" must be two-fold: it must not only reject the idea that the state (or culture, or ideas) are driven by the logic of the economy. More fundamentally, it must challenge the idea that there can exist a "logic" of the economy that is not itself institutionally and culturally constituted.⁹²

NOTES

1. John Locke, Two Treatises on Government, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).
2. Not only do we therefore not need a ruler's permission to exercise those rights; the duty of the government is above all to secure those "natural rights" through the consent of all "rational men" (II, 90, p. 344). Among the many recent studies which address theoretically and historically the nature and influence of Locke's views on property see

- especially John Dunn, The Political Thought of John Locke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); J.G.A. Pocock, Virtue, Commerce and History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Richard Ashcraft, Locke's Two Treatises of Government (London, Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987); James Tully, A Discourse on Property (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Alan Ryan, Property (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987); Alan Ryan, Property and Political Theory (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984); H. T. Dickinson, Liberty and Property (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977); and Ian Shapiro, Political Criticism (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).
3. Niccoli Machiavelli, The Discourses (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970).
 4. Karl Marx, Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society (ed.), Lloyd Easton and Kurt Guddat (New York: Doubleday, 1967); German Ideology (1973); Capital, Vol. III (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1974); Capital, Vol. I (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976), Ch. 26.
 5. On the significance of social naturalism in defining the private sphere as a foundational natural object, see Margaret R. Somers, "The Political Culture Concept: The Empirical Power of Conceptual Transformation" (paper presented at the American Sociological Association meetings, Cincinnati, 1991).
 6. See also Reinhard Bendix, Nation-Building and Citizenship (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977 [1967]); Charles Tilly, Coercion, Capital, and European States, A.D. 990-1990 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990); Tilly, "Where Do Rights Come From?" Working Paper #98 Center for Studies of Social Change, New School for Social Research (New York, 1990); Anthony Giddens, The Constitution of Societies (London: Macmillan, 1985); J. M. Barbalet, Citizenship (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988); and Bryan S. Turner, Citizenship and Capitalism (London: Allen & Unwin, 1986). For an important exception see Michael Walzer, Spheres of Justice (New York: Basic Books, 1982).
 7. T. H. Marshall, Citizenship and Social Class (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950).
 8. See Margaret Somers, "Where is Sociology After the Historic Turn? Knowledge Cultures and Historical Epistemologies," in Terrence J. McDonald (ed.), The Historic Turn in the Human Sciences (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993); and Somers, "The Political Culture Concept."
 9. William Townsend, Dissertation on the Poor Laws 1786 by a Well-Wisher of Mankind (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979 [1786]).
 10. Which is why in modern economic theory, institutions are defined as market "impairments" which must be bracketed for analytic purposes and only factored back in after the natural formula of the market is analyzed.
 11. Margaret R. Somers, "The People and the Law: Narrative Identity and the Place of the Public Sphere in the Formation on English Working Class Politics--1300-1850, a Comparative Analysis" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 1986); Somers, "Narrativity, Narrative Identity, and Social Action: Rethinking English Working-Class Formation," Social Science History, Winter 1992; and Somers, "Narrative, Agency, and the Social Constitution of Identity: Reclaiming the Epistemological 'Other'," in Craig Calhoun ed., From Persons to Nations: The Social Constitution of Identities (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993).

12. Noel W. Thompson, The People's Science: the Popular Political Economy of Exploitation and Crisis, 1816-1834 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).
13. H.L. Perkin, The Origins of Modern English Society 1790-1880 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969); Neil J. Smelser, Social Change in the Industrial Revolution: an Application of Theory to the Lancashire Cotton Industry, 1770-1840 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959); Craig J. Calhoun, The Question of Class Struggle (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); Gareth Stedman Jones, Languages of Class: Studies in English Working-Class History 1837-1982 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
14. Tully, Discourse; Ian Shapiro, "Resources, Capacities and Ownership: The Workmanship Ideal and Distributive Justice" (unpublished paper, 1989); Dunn, The Political Thought of John Locke.
15. A. Plummer, Bronterre: A Political Biography of Bronterre O'Brien, 1804-1864 (London: Allen and Unwin, 1971), pp.177-178.
16. For an interesting approach to Country Party politics, see I. Hampshire-Monk, "Civic Humanism and Parliamentary Reform: The Case of the Society of the Friends of the People," The Journal of British Studies Vol.18(2), 1979.
17. E.P. Thompson opens his The Making of the English Working Class (New York: Vintage, 1966) with a discussion of English radicalism in the 1790s through the Napoleonic Wars.
18. "It is going too far to say that Locke either said or implied in the Second Treatise that 'he who does not work, neither shall he eat,' but it is not going too far to say that what Locke wrote implied it. [And] Works outlive their authors..." Ryan, Property and Political Theory, p.4 (italics in original).
19. Stedman Jones, Languages of Class, pp.108-111.
20. The concept of the epistemologically privileged place of a "natural object" is taken up at length in Somers, "The Political Culture Concept."
21. Paraphrased from Jack Goody, Death, Property and the Ancestors (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1962): "A man without social relations is a man without property," p.287.
22. On the surprising number of women who served apprenticeships see K. D. M. Snell, Annals of the Labouring Poor: Social Change in Agrarian England 1660-1900 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Maxine Berg, "Women's Work, Mechanisation and the Early Phases of Industrialization in England," in Patrick Joyce (ed.), The Historical Meanings of Work (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 64-98.
23. See below for a full discussion of the relational meaning of the word "mystery."
24. For a full discussion of this conception and the development of nineteenth-century citizenship-claims see Margaret R. Somers, "Political Culture and the Public Sphere: Rethinking the Making of Citizenship," Working Paper #68, Comparative Study of Social Transformation, University of Michigan (Ann Arbor, 1991); and Somers, The People and the Law.
25. On machine-breaking and Luddism, see E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, Chap. 14; E. Hobsbawm, Labouring Men (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1964); J. R. Dinwiddie, "Luddism and Politics in

the Northern Counties," Social History 4, no. 1 (1979): 33-63; Charlotte Bronte, Shirley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979).

On petitioning to Parliament and Chartism, see Clive Behagg, Politics and Production in the Early Nineteenth-Century (London: Routledge, 1990); Asa Briggs, "The Background of Parliamentary Reform in Three English Cities (1830-32)," Cambridge Historical Journal 10 (1952): 293-317; "The Language of 'Class' in Early Nineteenth-Century England," pp. 43-73 in Asa Briggs and John Saville (eds.), Essays in Labour History (London: Macmillan, 1960); James Epstein, The Lion of Freedom: Feargus O'Connor and the Chartist Movement, 1832-1842 (London: Croom Helm, 1982); James Epstein and Dorothy Thompson (eds.), The Chartist Experience: Studies in Working-Class Radicalism: 1930-1860 (London: Macmillan, 1982); J. C. Belchem, "Henry Hunt and the Evolution of the Mass Platform," English Historical Review 93 (1978): 739-773; Belchem, "Radical Language and Ideology in Nineteenth-Century England: The Challenge of the Mass Platform," Albion 20 (1988): 247-259; Belchem, "Republicanism, Popular Constitutionalism and the Radical Platform in Early Nineteenth-Century England," Social History 6 (1981); D. Thompson, The Chartists; R. G. Gammage, The History of the Chartist Movement (New York: Kelley, 1969); M. Hovell, The Chartist Movement (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1966); Stedman Jones, Languages of Class; J. Epstein, "Understanding the Cap of Liberty: Symbolic Practice and Social Conflict in Early Nineteenth-Century England," Past and Present 122 (1989): 75-118.

On storming work houses, see A. Digby, Pauper Palaces (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978); Charles Tilly, "Proletarianization and Rural Collective Action in East Anglia and Elsewhere," Peasant Studies, 10,1 (1982): 5-34.

On the fight to retain apprenticeship and wage regulations, see J. Rule, The Labouring Classes in Early Industrial England, 1750-1850 (London: Longman, 1986); I. Prothero, Artisans and Politics in Early Nineteenth Century London: John Gast and His Times (Folkestone, England: Dawson, 1979); J. Hammond and B. Hammond, The Skilled Labourer 1760-1832 (London, New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1920 [1967]); P. Mantoux, The Industrial Revolution in the Eighteenth Century: An Outline of the Beginnings of the Modern Factory System in England (New York: Harper & Row, 1961). On fighting for a ten hour day, see J. T. Ward, The Factory Movement 1830-1850 (London: MacMillan, 1962); Cecil Driver, Tory Radical: The Life of Richard Oastler (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946); Robbie Gray, "The Languages of Factory Reform in Britain, c. 1830-1860," pp. 143-179 in P. Joyce (ed.), The Historical Meaning of Work (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); S. C. Deb, "The British Factory Movement in the Early Nineteenth Century," Indian Journal of Economics 44 (1963); B. Hutchins and A. Harrison, The History of Factory Legislation (Westminster: P. S. King & Staples, 1926); Philip Grant, The Ten Hours Bill: The History of Factory Legislation (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1866); Samuel Kydd, The History of the Factory Movement from the Year 1802 to the Enactment of the Ten Hours' Bill in 1847 (London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1857). On fighting for the right to outdoor poor relief, see Norman Edsall, The Anti-Poor Law Movement (Manchester: Manchester University Press; Totowa, N.J.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1971); M. E. Rose, "The Anti-Poor Law Movement in the North of England," Northern History 1 (1966), 1974; "The Anti-Poor Law Agitation," in J. T. Ward (ed.), Popular Movements c.

- 1830-1850 (London: MacMillan, 1971); Driver, Tory Radical, Chs. 22, 24, 25; J. T. Ward, Popular Movements c. 1830-1850 (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1971). On strikes, see R. G. Kirby and A. E. Musson, The Voice of the People, John Doherty, 1798-1854: Trade Unionist, Radical and Factory Reformer (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1975); J. Foster, Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution: Early Industrial Capitalism in Three English Towns (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974); A. E. Musson, British Trade Unions, 1800-1875 (London: MacMillan, 1972); Rule, The Labouring Classes; I. Prothero, "William Benbow and the Concept of the General Strike," Past and Present 63 (1974): 132-171; Clive Behagg, "Custom, Class and Change: The Trade Societies of Birmingham," Social History 4 (1979): 455-480; "Secrecy, Ritual and Folk Violence: The Opacity of the Workplace in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century," pp. 154-179 in Robert D. Storch (ed.), Popular Custom and Culture in Nineteenth-Century England (New York: St. Martin's, 1982); "Masters and Manufacturers: Social Values and the Smaller Units of Production in Birmingham, 1800-1850," pp. 137-154 in Geoffrey Crossick and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt (eds.), Shopkeepers and Master Artisans in Nineteenth-Century Europe (London: Methuen, 1984); Politics and Production. On self-help, community education and Owenism, E. P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class; Barbara Taylor, Eve and the New Jerusalem: Socialism and Feminism in the Nineteenth Century (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983); D. Vincent, Bread, Knowledge and Freedom: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Working Class Autobiography (London: Europa Publications, 1981); Stedman Jones, Languages of Class; E. Yeo, "Robert Owen and Radical Culture," in S. Pollard and J. Salt (eds.), Robert Owen, Prophet of the Poor (London: MacMillan, 1971). On boycotting merchants, see Foster, Class Struggle. On crowds in general, see the classic by G. Rude, The Crowd in History (New York: Wiley, 1964); R. J. Holton, "The Crowd in History: Some Problems of Theory and Method," Social History 3 (1978): 219-233. On Britain and social movements, see Charles Tilly, "Repertoires of Contention in England and America," in Mayer N. Zald and John D. McCarthy (eds.), The Dynamics of Social Movements (Cambridge, Mass.: Winthrop, 1979); "Britain Creates the Social Movement," in James E. Cronin and Jonathan Schnerer (eds.), Social Conflict and the Political Order in Modern Britain (London: Croom Helm; New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1982); "Structural Change and Contention in Great Britain, 1758-1834," Working Paper #36, Center for Studies of Social Change, New School for Social Research (New York, 1986); "Twenty Years of British Contention" Working Paper #52, Center for Studies of Social Change, New School for Social Research (New York, 1987).
26. One of the most interesting indicators of this is the central role that trade courts played in resolving internal disputes among working people; see Behagg, "Secrecy, Ritual, and Folk Violence," p.170; see also, Somers, The People and the Law.
27. As Feargus O'Connor stated bluntly: "...and I have told you the immediate cause of your poverty is the exorbitant rents, tithes, interests on money, profits on labor, and profits on trade, which are imposed on you by laws made by the land stealers, the merchants, the manufacturers, and the tradesmen in that house [Parliament] from which you are excluded, and by which exclusion you are prevented from making laws to regulate your wages." Poor Man's Guardian, 14 April 1932, cited in Stedman Jones, Languages of Class, p. 119.

28. Driver, Tory Radical, *passim*, and references to the anti-Poor Law movement in footnote 25.
29. On the concept of "the people," cf. C. Hill, "Parliament and People in Seventeenth Century England," Past and Present 142 (1981):100-124; D. T. Rogers, Contested Truths: Keywords in American Politics Since Independence (New York: Basic Books, 1987); Prothero, Artisans and Politics.
30. Stedman Jones, Languages of Class; E. P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class; Foster, Class Struggle. Independence and autonomy were sought by artisans and factory workers alike: "The object they sought to obtain," stated the industrial cotton spinner John Doherty in 1834, "was that freedom and independence which had long been the characteristic of Englishmen, but of which at present only a small remnant was left." Cited in Kirby and Musson, The Voice of the People.
31. Activities against scabs, "knobsticks", and unapprenticed workers were common. Similarly, the massive support for Owenism among "modern" factory workers reflected the centrality of the co-operative principle. See Barbara Taylor, in Taylor, Eve and the New Jerusalem; D. Thompson, The Chartists; Kirby and Musson, The Voice of the People; Stedman Jones, Languages of Class; Hammond and Hammond, The Skilled Labourer.
32. Because of competition, John Gray declared, "the labourer who seeks employment, frequently finds enemies to his interest even among those who would otherwise be his friends..." John Gray 1915, Human Happiness, p. 45, cited in Stedman Jones, Languages of Class, p. 121.
33. Behagg, "Secrecy, Ritual, and Folk Violence."
34. The classic article on the language of class in the nineteenth-century is still Briggs, "The Language of 'Class'." For recent discussion on "language of class," see Stedman Jones, Languages of Class; Scott, "On Language"; Marc Steinberg, "Talkin' Class: Discourse, Ideology, and Their Roles in Class Conflict," in McNall, et al. (eds.), Bringing Class Back In (Boulder: Westview, 1991), pp. 261-284; Robbie Gray, "The Deconstruction of the English Working Class," Social History 11 (1986): 3363-73; Robbie Gray, "The Languages of Factory Reform in Britain"; John Belchem, "Radical Language and Ideology in Early Nineteenth-Century England: The Challenge of the Mass Platform," Albion 20 (1989): 247-59; Gregory Claeys, "Language, Class, and Historical Consciousness in Nineteenth-Century Britain," Economy and Society 14 (1985): 239-63; James E. Cronin, "Language, Politics and the Critique of Social History," Journal of Social History 20 (1986): 177-83; James Epstein, "Rethinking of the Categories of Working-Class History," Labour et Le Travail 18 (1986); Epstein, "Radical Dining."
35. For the convergence of constitutional and natural rights rhetoric, see E. P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class; James Epstein, "Understanding the Cap of Liberty: Symbolic Practice and Social Conflict in Early Nineteenth-Century England," Past and Present 122 (1989):75-118; Belchem, "Republicanism". On the link between artisanal skills, property, and political rights, Stedman Jones, Languages of Class; J. Rule, "The Property of Skill in the Period of Manufacture," in P. Joyce (ed.), The Historical Meanings of Work (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); E. J. Hobsbawm, "Artisan or Labour Aristocrat?" Economic History Review 37 (1984): 355-72; Joan Scott, "L'ouvriere! Mot imle, sordide ...: Women Workers in the Discourse of French Political Economy, 1840-1860," in P. Joyce (ed.), The Historical Meanings of Work (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

1987); "Work Identities for Men and Women: The Politics of Work and Family in the Parisian Garments Trades in 1848," in Joan Scott (ed.), Gender and the Politics of History (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); William H. Sewell, Jr., Work and Revolution in France (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

See Scott, "On Language, Gender, and Working-Class History," in Scott (ed.), Gender for a critique of Stedman Jones' opposing of political and class claims. For critiques of the opposition of rights-claims and community membership identities, see especially Walzer, Spheres of Justice; Martha Minow, "Interpreting Rights: An Essay for Robert Cover," The Yale Law Review 96 (1987): 1860-1915; S. Hall and D. Held, "Left and Rights," Marxism Today (June 1989): 16-22.

For an especially important view of rights-formation, cf. Charles Tilly, "Where Do Rights Come From?" Working Paper #98, Center for Studies of Social Change, New School for Social Research (New York, 1990).

36. See Somers, "Narrativity, Narrative Identity and Social Action."
37. On workers' self-narratives and autobiographies see John Burnett, David Vincent, and David Mayall (eds.), The Autobiography of the Working Class: An Annotated, Critical Bibliography, 3 vols. (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1984; 1987; 1989) and Vincent, Bread, Knowledge and Freedom.
38. Hans Medick, "The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism: Renewal of the Debate," in Raphael Samuel (ed.), People's History and Socialist Theory (London, Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), pp. 120-130; Hans Medick, "Plebeian Culture in the Transition to Capitalism," in Raphael Samuel and Gareth Stedman Jones (eds.), Culture, Ideology and Politics: Essays for Eric Hobsbawm (London, Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983, pp. 84-113.
39. Franklin Mendels, "Proto-Industrialization: The First Phase of the Industrialisation Process," Journal of Economic History 32 no. 1 (1970); Peter Kriedte, Hans Medick and J. Schlumbohm, Industrialization Before Industrialization (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Rudolf Braun, "Early Industrialization and Demographic Change in the Canton of Zurich," in Charles Tilly (ed.), Historical Studies of Changing Fertility (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. 289-334; "The Impact of Cottage Industry on an Agricultural Population," in David Landes (ed.), The Rise of Capitalism (New York, 1966); Charles Tilly, "Flows of Capital and Forms of Industry in Europe, 1500-1900," Theory and Society 12, no. 2 (1983): 123-142.
40. For one of the cleverest rejections of the new term, see Donald Coleman, "Proto-Industrialization: A Concept Too Many?" Economic History Review 2nd ser., 36 (1983): 435-448; see also Lawrence Stone, "The New Eighteenth Century," in New York Review of Books 31 no. 5 (1984).
41. Sidney Webb and Beatrice Webb, The History of Trade Unionism (London, New York, and Bombay: Longmans, Green and Co., 1907).
42. See Somers, The People and the Law, for extended details supporting this claim.
43. For the eighteenth-century, see J. Rule, The Experience of Labour; *ibid.*, The Labouring Classes in Eighteenth-Century England; C. B. Dobson, Masters and Men (London: Croon Helm, 1980); K. D. M. Snell, Annals of the Labouring Poor: Social Change in Agrarian England 1660-1900 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Roy Porter, English Society in the Eighteenth Century (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982). For

- the seventeenth-century see K. Wrightson, English Society, 1580-1680 (London: Hutchinson, 1982); Snell, Annals of the Labouring Poor; and David Underdown, Revel, Riot and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England 1603-1660 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985). For the sixteenth-century, see Buchanan Sharp, In Contempt of All Authority: Rural Artisans and Riot in the West of England, 1586-1660 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982). For the fifteenth- and fourteenth-centuries see R. H. Wawney, "The Assessment of Wages in England by the Justices of the Peace," in W. E. Minchinton, Wage Regulation in pre-Industrial England, pp.37-92; R. Webber, The Peasants' Revolt, (Lavenham and Suffolk: Terrence Dalton Limited, 1980); R. B. Dobson, The Peasants Revolt of 1381, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1983); R. H. Hilton, Bond Men Made Free (London: Methuen & Co., 1973); T. H. Aston, ed., Landlords, Peasants and Politics in Medieval England (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); R. H. Hilton, ed., Peasants, Knights, and Heretics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).
44. D. Levine, "Industrialization and the Proletarian Family," Past and Present, no.107, 1985:179-80; S. Pollard, Peaceful Conquest (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981); B. Sharp, In Contempt of All Authority: Rural Artisans and Riot in the West of England, 1586-1660 (London: University of California Press, 1980); M. Berg, "Political Economy and the Principles of Manufacture 1700-1800," in M. Berg, P. Hudson, and M. Sonenscher, Manufacture in Town and Country Before the Factory (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
45. It is difficult to separate the empirical and the theoretical critiques since most cover both aspects, but see especially Rab Houston and K. D. M. Snell, "Proto-Industrialization? Cottage Industry, Social Change, and Industrial Revolution," The Historical Review 27 (1984): 473-92 and Charles Sabel and J. Zeitlin, "Historical Alternatives to Mass Production," Past and Present 108 (1985); Charles Sabel, "Protoindustry and the Problem of Capitalism as a Concept: Response to Jean H. Quataert," International Labour and Working-Class History 33 (1988): 30-37; Jean H. Quataert, "A New View of Industrialization: 'Protoindustry' or the Role of Small-Scale, Labor-Intensive Manufacture in the Capitalist Environment," International Labor and Working-Class History, No. 33, Spring 1988:3-22; Quataert, "The Politics of Rural Industrialization: Class, Gender, and Collective Protest in the Saxon Oberlausitz of the Late Nineteenth Century," Central European History 20 (June 1987): 91-124; Frank Perlin, "Proto-Industrialization and Pre-Colonial South Asia," Past and Present 98 (1983); but for the very strongest argument for the importance of the thesis, see Geoff Eley, "The Social History of Industrialization: 'Proto-Industry' and the Origins of Capitalism," Economy and Society 13, No. 4 (1984).
46. Karl Polanyi, The Livelihood of Man, ed. Harry Pearson (New York: Academic Press, 1977).
47. This framework is variably known as the "sociology of labor markets" or simply "institutional economics." This is of course a paraphrase of Karl Polanyi's "The Economy as an Instituted Process." As Polanyi argues, it is the "social organization of appropriational power...[which] locates the institutional matrix which orders man-to-man economic relations." Harry Pearson, "Editor's Introduction," in Karl Polanyi, The Livelihood of Man, ed. Harry Pearson (New York: Academic Press, 1977), pp. xxx, xxxii.

48. G. Unwin, The Guilds and Companies of London (London: Frank Cass and Co., Ltd., 1908); Industrial Organization in the 16th and 17th Centuries (London: Frank Cass and Co., Ltd., 1904); Cunningham, The Growth of English Industry; S. Kramer, The English Craft Gilds and the Government (New York: Columbia University Press, 1905); Luijo Brentano, On the History and Development of Gilds, and the Origin of Trade Unions (London: Trubner & Co., 1870); "The Guilds," in E. Thrupp, Early Medieval Society (1973); "On the History and Development of Guilds and the Origin of Trade-Unions," in Toulmin Smith (ed.), English Gilds (London: Oxford University Press, 1963); Leeson, Travelling Brothers.
49. These were institutional foundations which are conventionally identified with but had no logically exclusive links to urban settings.
50. Alan Harding, "Political Libery in the Middle Ages," Speculum 55, no. 3 (1980): 442-47; Toulmin Smith (ed.), English Gilds (London: Oxford University Press, 1963); M. Bloch, Feudal Society, two volumes, L. Manyon, trans. (Chicago, 1961); Anthony Black, Guilds and Civil Society in European Political Thought from the Twelfth Century to the Present (London: Methuen & Co., 1984).
51. On guilds see Sylvia Thrupp, "The Guilds," in M. M. Posten, et al. (eds.), The Cambridge Economic History of Europe, Vol. III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963); Brentano, "On the History and Development of Guilds"; Philip Abrams and E. A. Wrigley (eds.), Towns in Societies: Essays in Economic History and Historical Sociology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Susan Reynolds, An Introduction to the History of English Medieval Towns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977); P. Corfield, "Urban Development in England and Wales in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in D. C. Coleman and H. H. Johns (eds.), Trade, Government, and Economy in Pre-Industrial England (London, 1976); Black, Guilds; Steve Rappaport, "The Extent and Foundations of Companies' Powers in Sixteenth-Century London," paper presented at Social Science History Association Meetings (Chicago, 1988); Worlds Within Worlds: Structures of Life in Sixteenth-Century London (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Laurie Nussdorfer, "Urban Politics and the Guilds in Early Modern Europe: Guilds and Government in Baroque Rome," paper presented at the Social Science History Association (Chicago, 1988); Gail Bossenga, "Regulating the Local Economy: Guilds and the Town Council in Eighteenth-Century Lille," paper presented at the Social Science History Association (Chicago, 1988); Pamela Nightengale, "Capitalists, Crafts and Constitutional Change in Late Fourteenth-Century London," Past and Present 124 (August 1989): 3-35.
52. Cited in Rappaport, Worlds Within Worlds, p.31.
53. The merchant guild preceded the crafts guild, but the latter (composed of masters and journeymen) became far more important.
54. On apprenticeship, see especially E. Lipson, An Introduction to the Economic History of England, 3 Vols. (London: A. & C. Black, Ltd., 1920), Vol. I, Chap. 8.
55. Tramping, one of the most important forms of labor migration, was contained within social membership networks, see Leeson, Travelling Brothers.
56. Oxford English Dictionary s. v. "mistry." In ancient Greece, the craftsmen were, like priests and doctors, believed to possess some secret power; see M. Godelier, "Work and its Representations: A Research Proposal," History Workshop Journal 10 (1980).

57. Oxford English Dictionary, op. cit.; Brentano, On the History and Development of Guilds, p. cxxxii.
58. For various references to "mystery," "mistry," "misterium," "misterium artis," or "mestera, misteria, from ministerium," as the collective body of the craft guild (rather than the skill itself) see A. B. Hibbert, "The Economic Policies of Towns," in Postan, et al., The Cambridge Economic History of Europe, Vol. III (1963), pp. 157-229; Harold J. Berman, Law and Revolution: The Formation of the Western Legal Tradition (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 391; Reynolds, English Medieval Towns, p. 165; Black, Guilds, p. 14; Leeson, Travelling Brothers, p. 26.
59. On illegal shops as unapprenticed ones, see Lipson, The Economic History of England, Vol. II, p. 41.
60. On women in guilds, see Lucy Smith, "Introduction" in Toulmin Smith (ed.), English Gilds; Leeson, Travelling Brothers, pp. 27-28. On oaths and obligations, see Prothero, Artisans and Politics, p. 37; Thrupp, "The Guilds," pp. 184, 232-33; Hibbert, "The Economic Policies of Towns"; Leeson, Travelling Brothers.
61. C. Adams-Phythian, "Ceremony and the Citizen: The Communal Year at Coventry 1450-1550," in P. Clark (ed.), The Early Modern Town (New York: Longman, 1976), pp. 106-07.
62. For the strongest evidence on this point, see Black, Guilds, as well as the numerous guild documents collected in T. Smith, English Gilds.
63. Somers, The People and the Law; "Political Culture and the Public Sphere: Rethinking the Making of Citizenship," CSST Working Paper #68, University of Michigan (Ann Arbor, 1991).
64. See Berg, "Women's Work," on the false dichotomy between markets and communities.
65. Turner, Trade Union Growth, p.86. Inspired by Turner, Hobsbawm, and Thompson, and challenging what was considered to be the Webbs' overemphasis on formal "modern" labor institutions, social historians in the last twenty-five years have tended to explain the presence of collective action by the absence of formal institutions. In Turner's words, early labor organizations were simply part of community life, part of "the habit of association" that was "natural... without artificial contrivance"--an autonomy which was later lost when bureaucracies emerged to divide the rank and file from the formal leadership of new trade unions. But, if the Webbs' approach suffered from an institutional excess, the new autonomist one suffers from a sociological deficiency: it takes as axiomatic that which a sociological approach must take as requiring explanation. The "habit of association" may have been the precondition for organization, but that habit takes as its precondition the continuity of a settled population. And that continuity cannot be taken for granted in the face of the multiple market forces of discontinuity endemic to the rural-industrial world. For the long overdue reattention to institutions in labor history, see J. Zeitlin, "From Labour History to the History of Industrial Relations," The Economic History Review 2nd Series 40, (1987):159-184; see especially p.178.
66. Even a shift of emphasis from formal to informal activities will not take us far enough; to point to the importance of the public house, the friendly society, the tramping system, or the box club still does not explain--but rather further illustrates--the continuity of association.

67. This argument supports to some degree that of recent sociological contributions to the "social foundations of collective action," see, for example, Craig Calhoun, "Community: Toward a Variable Conceptualization for Comparative Research," Social History 5,1 (1980):105-129. As is evident, however, it differs significantly in focussing on the institutional character of those foundations; see Somers, "Narrative, Agency, and the Social Constitution of Identities."
68. M. Davies, The Enforcement of English Apprenticeship 1563-1642 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956); Rule, The Experience of Labour, p. 95.
69. E. P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class.
70. Montesquieu [as paraphrased by William Cobbett] wrote "A man ought not to be called poor, merely because he has neither land, nor house, nor goods; his labour is property; it is better than an annuity; the mechanic who gives his art to his children has left them a fortune." G. Himmelfarb, The Idea of Poverty (New York: Vintage Press, 1985).
71. Cited in Rule, The Experience of Labour, p. 107.
72. Rule, p. 114.
73. M. Anderson, Approaches to the History of the Western Family, 1500-1914 (London: MacMillan, 1980); F. Collier, The Family Economy of the Working Classes in the Cotton Industry (Manchester, 1964); A. Clark, Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982); I. Pinchbeck, Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution (London: G. Routledge & Sons, Ltd., 1930 [1981]).
74. Cunningham, The Growth of English Industry, Vol. I.
75. K. Wrightson, English Society, 1580-1680 (London: Harvester Press, 1982); Rule, The Experience of Labour.
76. Pinchbeck, Women Workers, p. 115.
77. M. Anderson, Family Structure in Nineteenth-Century Lancashire (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971) discusses how the family replaces apprenticeship in the nineteenth century.
78. Braun, "The Impact of Cottage Industry."
79. To be sure, a son could abandon his family and seek individual fame and fortune, but the only difficulty with such hubris of self-will was that sooner or later such an effort would backfire. In the absence of family and neighborly networks, he would be potentially an "illegal worker"--unapprenticed and vulnerable to blacklegging.
80. L. Stone, "Social Mobility in England, 1500-1700," Past and Present 33 (1966); Medick, "The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism."
81. A. Redford, Labour Migration in England (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1964); Wrightson, English Society, p. 87; Pinchbeck, Women Workers, pp. 112, 160, 168, 179; David Levine, Family Formation in an Age of Nascent Capitalism (London: Academic Press, 1977).
82. Levine, Family Formation; Roy Porter, English Society in the Eighteenth Century (London: Penguin, 1982).
83. Wrightson, English Society, p. 42; Hans Medick, "The Proto-Industrial Family Economy," Social History (1976): 84. Social historians have drastically reduced their assessment of kinship density in the pre-factory communities; K. Wrightson, "Household and Kinship in Sixteenth Century England," History Workshop Journal 12 (1981): 151-158; Peter Laslett (ed.), Household and Family in Past Time (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972).
84. H. Heaton, The Yorkshire Woollen and Worsted Industries (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1920).

85. M. Berg, P. Hudson and M. Sonenscher (eds.), Manufacture in Town and Country Before the Factory (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
86. Medick, "The Proto-Industrial Family Economy," p. 61.
87. D. Gregory, "The Process of Industrial Change 1730-1900," in R. A. Dodgshon and R. A. Butlin (eds.), A Historical Geography of England and Wales (London, New York: Academic Press, 1978), pp. 291-312.
88. Heaton, The Yorkshire Woollen and Worsted Industries; E. P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class; Rule, The Experience of Labour.
89. Webb and Webb, The History of Trade Unionism.
90. E. P. Thompson, "Eighteenth-Century English Society: Class Struggle Without Class?" Social History 4 (1979): 133-66.
91. See footnote 2 for several influential discussions of property.
92. See A. Hirschman, Rival Views of Market Society and Other Recent Essays (New York: Viking, 1986); Hirschman, "Against Parsimony," American Economic Papers and Proceedings (1984), pp. 89-96; K. Polanyi, The Great Transformation; M. Granovetter, "Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness," American Journal of Sociology, 91 (1985), pp.481-510; Fred Block, Post-Industrial Possibilities: A Critique of Economic Discourse, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989); Richard Swedberg, "Economic Sociology," Current Sociology 35 (1987), pp.1-221; Margaret R. Somers, "Karl Polanyi's Intellectual Legacy," in Kari Polanyi-Levitt, ed., The Life and Work of Karl Polanyi, Montreal/New York: Black Rose Books, 1991; F. Block and M. R. Somers, "Beyond the Economic Fallacy: The Holistic Social Science of Karl Polanyi," in T. Skocpol, ed., Vision and Method in Historical Sociology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); D. Bell, "Models and Reality in Economic Discourse" in D. Bell and I. Kristol, eds., The Crisis in Economic Theory (New York: Basic Books, 1981); M. Sahlins, Culture and Practical Reason (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976); Donald N. McCloskey, The Rhetoric of Economics, (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985); B. Roberts, R. Finnegan, D. Gallie, eds., New Approaches to Economic Life (Manchester University Press, 1985); S. Gudeman, Economics as Culture: Models and Metaphors of Livelihood (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986). And for an important introduction of the ideas of economic sociology to social history see Patrick Joyce, "The Historical Meanings of Work: an Introduction," pp. 1-30 in The Historical Meanings of Work, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

