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**"Race, Class, and
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in France and the US"**

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**Race, Class, and Symbolic Boundaries
in France and the United States**

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**ATTENTION: This talk reports preliminary results from an ongoing research.
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To address cultural differences across classes and racial groups and the ways in which predominant images of the moral characteristics of groups shape boundary work and exclusion across groups, I analyze French and American male lower-middle class cultures. I draw on 150 in-depth interviews conducted with randomly sampled Euro-American and African-American working class men living in New York suburbs, and with Gallic and North-African working class men living in Paris suburbs. I compare these men with French and American college-educated professionals, managers, and businessmen who also live in New York and Paris suburbs. In both cases, I explore inductively the cultural categories through which people assess the worth of others to document the relative salience of various status dimensions across groups. I examine in detail the criteria that lower-middle class men stress at the discursive level to define and discriminate between worthy and less worthy persons, that is, between "their sort of folks" and "the sort they don't much like". More specifically, I scrutinize symbolic boundaries (the types of lines that men draw when they categorize people) and high status signals (the keys to their evaluative distinctions). In the process, I identify the differences that are at the center of individual maps of perception as well as the differences that are ignored. I presume that the comparative method --the shock of otherness--will make valued status signals salient.

I address two specific questions: (1) To what extent do working class men assess status using standards different from those mobilized by upper-middle class men;¹ (2) To what extent do the moral boundaries drawn by working class men overlap with their racial boundaries. Therefore, I ask: Do the workers I talked to believe that they are in some aspects more worthy than upper-middle class men? Do they define high-status signals against the signals that I found valued by professionals, managers, and businessmen -- that is, against definitions of high status signals that stress professional

¹In one of the most recent and detailed studies of the American working class, David Halle (1984) suggests that it is rapidly losing its cultural specificity as working class men increasingly define their identity not through work but through their middle class consumption patterns and lifestyles. French researchers are reaching similar conclusions. They suggest that the unique qualities of working class culture are rapidly declining as a result of the effects of the mass media and the educational system (Terrail 1990), and owing to a decrease in income inequality (Morrison 1988). As in America, the growing presence of women, part-time workers, and immigrants in the workplace is also contributing to the destruction of the traditional male working class culture.

success, financial comfort, familiarity with high culture, cosmopolitanism, and involvement in elite social circles? Do they create a reverse hierarchy of values, putting for instance, morals above money? Are ascribed characteristics, such as age, gender, race, religion or ethnicity, more salient in their boundary work? Do they draw boundaries primarily against lower class people, other lower-middle class people, or upper-middle class people? How do these boundaries overlap racial boundaries? What dimensions of identity are used to draw such boundaries? And, more generally, what is the content and form of the subjective boundaries that my respondents produced in the context of the interview?²

This project builds on my book Money, Morals and Manners, in which I analyzed the culture of the French and American upper-middle class, drawing on 160 interviews I conducted with college-educated professionals, managers, and entrepreneurs who lived in Indianapolis, New York, Paris, and Clermont-Ferrand. Here again, my goal was to analyze the criteria of evaluation used to assess the worth of people. I argued that cultural criteria of evaluation such as refinement, level of education, and familiarity with high culture, are more important in France than in the United States. When people were asked to describe to whom they feel inferior and superior, they tended to focus on such criteria. In the United States, much more emphasis was put on socioeconomic boundaries, that is, on worldly success, economic standing, professional mobility, involvement in high- status circles, and power. In other words, people were more likely to designate as their hero Lee Iacocca or Donald Trump than a great intellectual. Both in France and the United States, moral boundaries were valued, but less so than cultural boundaries in France, and less so than socioeconomic boundaries in the United States. These boundaries were based on honesty, work ethic, personal integrity, respect for the Ten Commandments, and so on. For instance, when asked what values they want to give to their children, people who draw strong moral boundaries were most likely to say that above all they want their children to be honest and hardworking and that this is more important than being intellectually stimulating or wealthy. This book was, in part, a theoretical and empirical critique of Bourdieu's **Distinction**.

I will concentrate here on the moral dimension of boundary work and discuss what aspects of morality are stressed by the Euro-American and Gallic workers I interviewed. I allude only to differences between majority and minority workers and do not discuss

²Eventually, I will also ask myself, how do black lower middle class men draw boundaries against white people?

differences between blue-collar and white-collar workers. I am still analyzing the data. Therefore, these results are very preliminary and subject to further analysis. ³

Research Procedures

The study concerns the stable working class, not the underclass or the unemployed. For operational purposes, I define the working class to include blue-collar workers, low-status white-collar workers, and service sector workers.⁴ To be interviewed, respondents need to have shown continuous full-time participation in the labor force for at least three years, have high school degrees, no more than fourteen years of education, and supervise no more than ten workers. Only males are considered to minimize cultural variations unrelated to occupation, nationality, and race/ethnicity. The 150 men I interviewed are listed in Tables 1 and 2 by type of occupation (blue/white collar) and ethnicity.⁵

Insert Tables 1 and 2 About Here

The research and data analysis procedures parallel those used for my book Money, Morals, and Manners.⁶ Interviewees were chosen from working class suburbs of Paris

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The following research hypotheses were developed after listening to all the interviews once. These hypotheses will be revised after I perform a systematic analysis of each interview and a thematic analysis of all the transcripts.

⁴With the decline of the industrial sector, service workers comprise a growing proportion of the working class. Low status white collar workers and blue collar workers are becoming increasingly similar culturally as suggested by French studies of consumption patterns and intermarriage (Glaude and Moutardier 1982).

⁵I also interviewed a dozen informants who are not included in the sample because they do not meet all the criteria described. For information on how these institutionalized repertoires are created, see Money, Morals and Manners, chapter 5.

⁶ In Money, Morals, and Manners, I studied cultural differences between residents of cultural centers and cultural peripheries (Indianapolis/New York and Clermont-Ferrand/Paris), it revealed important national variations but only negligible regional differences. Thus, I have decided to study only one site per country in the new project, despite the fact that regional differences could be stronger in the working class than they are in the upper-middle class.

such as Nanterre, Aubervillier, Stains, Bobigny, Ivry, Vitry and Creteil.⁷ Interviews in the New York suburbs were conducted in places such as Linden, Rahway, Roselle, Union, and Elizabeth in New Jersey, and West Hempstead and Uniondale on Long Island. The upper-middle class respondents also lived in the Paris suburbs, but in ritzy towns such as Versailles, St-Germain-en-Laye, and St-Cloud, whereas the New York upper-middle class residents lived in places such as Summit, Madison, and New Providence, New Jersey, and Rockville Center Village on Long Island. Interviews lasted approximately two hours and were confidential and recorded. Each was held at a time and place chosen by the respondent: cafes, parks, overcrowded apartments, small pavilions, warehouses, train stations, and factories.

After identifying a number of suburbs with low to medium income levels using census data, research assistants randomly chose for each site more than nine hundred names from telephone directories. They conducted short phone interviews to determine eligibility and willingness to participate. I chose the interviewees from the potential group of interested respondents.

To tap symbolic boundaries, that is, to obtain a picture of the labels these men use to describe people whom they place above and below themselves, I asked them to both concretely and abstractly describe people with whom they prefer not to associate, those in relation to whom they feel superior and inferior, and those who evoke hostility, indifference, and sympathy. Furthermore, I asked them to describe the negative and positive traits of some of their coworkers and acquaintances. I regarded these descriptions as templates of their mental maps.⁸ I also asked them to describe their perceptions of the

⁷A growing proportion of the working class population now lives in the suburbs. This is particularly the case for white and French Algerian workers who are being pushed outside of Paris by the rising prices of real estate (Barou 1980) and for an increasing number of African-American workers. In 1985, 25 percent of African-Americans lived in suburban areas compared to 50 percent of Americans of European ancestry (Jaynes and Williams 1989). (On the structure of the population of the New York area see Harris 1991).

⁸The questions that arise when one explores feelings of superiority and inferiority are as follows: "Whether we admit it or not, we all feel inferior or superior to some people at times. In relation to what types of people do you feel inferior? Superior? Can you give me concrete examples? What do these people have in common?" To explore likes and dislikes in others, I will ask participants, "What kind of people would you rather avoid? What kind of people leave you indifferent? What kind of people attract you in general?"

cultural traits that are most valued in their workplaces. Finally, to identify their definitions of high status signals, I explored their child-rearing values. In this process, I often asked respondents to make their standards explicit and guide me toward a greater understanding of their cultural categories.

(1) Class differences in boundary work

French and American blue-collar workers draw very strong moral boundaries when they discuss their feelings of superiority and inferiority and the criteria they use to assess the value of people. When asked to describe the qualities they value most in their friends, they do not talk about how cultured, refined, and successful their friends are. Instead, they stress the importance of being hardworking, friendly, helpful, and responsible. They emphasize that they have known their friends forever, have not been disappointed in them and, therefore, trust them totally. They also talked about the importance of "real values," such as honesty and sincerity.

Professionals and managers also value such traits, but not noticeably more so than refinement or socioeconomic success.⁹ Indeed, again, the French value cultural signals most (refinement, intelligence, cosmopolitanism) while Americans value socioeconomic signals most (material success, power, etc.). The greater working class focus on morality might suggest that cultural differences across classes remain important both in France and the United States. In fact, this cultural differentiation appears to be greater in France than in the United States, owing in part to the greater belief that American workers have in the American dream and to their tendency to draw socioeconomic boundaries more frequently than French workers do.

(2) Boundaries drawn against the upper-middle class

Can you give me specific examples? Which qualities do these people have in common?"

⁹In Lamont (1992, 260), I show that moral and cultural boundaries are equally important for the French upper-middle class men I talked to, whereas socioeconomic boundaries are very slightly less important (esp. chap. 5, fnn 2, 3).

When stressing the importance of moral criteria of evaluation, working class men are often implicitly or explicitly drawing boundaries against upper-middle class people. It appears that Parisian working class men in particular tend to define themselves in opposition to the upper-middle class by describing at great length the ways in which they consider themselves to be better off than the cadres (managers and professionals), stressing above all, again, their moral superiority over this group.

First, a sizable number of interviewees defined "a good job" (*un bon boulot*) in opposition to what they perceive to be the characteristics of typical cadres jobs. For instance, respondents often value having fixed work hours that leave them ample time for personal lives and leisure activities. In their view, one of the main advantages that they have over the cadres is that they can give more time to their families. This is often thought to be a form of **moral superiority** because it symbolizes that they have more meaningful lives than do upper-middle class people. As a high-tech technician whose job consists of taking photographs of electronic chips told me as I was interviewing him in the basement that he himself skillfully finished, "What really counts in life is the family. [cadres] invest themselves in their work, I invest myself in my family and my leisure."

Second, they often believe that upper-middle class people have difficulties developing genuine and warm relationships with their colleagues. Several of my respondents perceive the upper-middle class work environment as a jungle where you are forced to build a carapace and to carefully control your image. As one of them puts it:

They need to have a certain lifestyle, they are not supposed to do this, they are not supposed to do that. I don't think that it is very interesting. They cannot have friends because they cannot trust people. It is the law of the fittest... They are always forced to play a role.

In contrast, the men I talked to often perceive their own milieu as one where it is possible to be **honest and sincere** and to develop warm relationships with coworkers. Several described at length the dirty stories they swap with their colleagues; the great laughs they have; the gargantuan communal lunches they organize; the practical jokes they play on one another --such as welding the drawers of worktables; the drinking bouts they share to celebrate a new baby, a new car, a new job, the summer vacations, Christmas, anything. They often contrast these pleasures to what they perceive to be the less genuine,

and more serious and gray lives of the cadres. They greatly value the warmth of their own work environments. A man who works in pulverized coal, described human warmth as one of several priceless "natural resources" of life, that is, one of several forms of "free fun," including the sun, the family and, of course, sexual pleasure. For men like him, **having friends** -- real friends who you can trust totally and ask anything from -- is one of the main pleasures in life. Several of the men I talked to affirmed that "this is what really counts in life," not money. This solidarity most often manifests itself as carrying one's weight, sharing the workload and the most painful tasks with others. It also manifested in the refusal to snitch or to buy into the bosses' attempts to foster competition between workers. This can be viewed as a form of moral boundary because it involves standing up for one's moral responsibility toward other human beings.

Lower-middle class rejection of upper-middle class culture is revealed not only in these feelings of moral superiority that the workers I talked to have toward professionals and managers, but also in the antisocioeconomic boundaries that they draw against this group, their strong rejection of people who value social position at the expense of everything else. They draw such boundaries much more frequently than upper-middle class people do. They often reject those who are oriented toward the maximization of social position at any price. They dislike people who are pretentious, too ambitious, or overly anxious about money and upward mobility. These strong antisocioeconomic boundaries are also expressed in the fact that these men are more reluctant than upper-middle class people to say that they feel inferior or superior to certain people; they greatly value egalitarianism and are more likely to relativize judgments of worth, to make several criteria of hierarchalization salient, and to declare, following an electronics technician, that "you can be very inferior on some dimensions but superior on others". Or, as echoed by a boiler maker, "Some are manual, some are intellectual. Everyone has his own strength. If I ask someone to do some welding and he can't, I will show him my superiority. I can make him feel very bad.... We will see if he has as much in his arms as he has in his head. Each has his own thing."

Few French interviewees buy into the cult of social mobility, excellence, and success. As one of them explained: "Being very good at something is not desirable because when you are very good at something, you are generally bad at something else. It is much better to be average." On these points I find some strong cross-national differences, but time constraints prevent me from discussing them here.

These antisocioeconomic boundaries can be interpreted as **strategies of resistance** toward predominant definitions of status, that is, strategies that allow working class men to come up on top and to maintain a certain autonomy toward upper-middle class culture, that is, toward the dominant cultural models that ascribe them little worth.

(3) Boundaries drawn against the lower class

The stable working class men I talked to put a great emphasis on responsibility as a signal of high status. Simultaneously, they often define themselves in opposition to thieves, drunks, people who destroy property, draw graffiti, make noise, are dirty. These traits are very often associated with the lower class or with the unstable working class. For instance, when asked to describe in general what kind of people he does not like, a printer answers:

Irresponsible people. People that live for the moment. Like I said, I am not a big person about saving money, but I'm always looking for the future. I try to base my decisions today on what is going to affect me tomorrow, not just what I want to do today. If I want I can go out tonight and get totally drunk, I'm going to say, well, I have to work tomorrow. ...

I don't like people who hold temp jobs, or who work on job just to get unemployment so they can live off unemployment all summer long so they can ride their motorcycle around. Who get into fights. who beat on people because they said something to somebody's girlfriend, stuff like that. Most of the population would agree with me, that's not the type of person to hang around with. (...) I like people who are responsible... who are close to family, close to friends.

Several other workers expressed their rejection of those who have temporary jobs. A worker in a tin factory said that he is successful in life because he "does not have to be a dummy and struggle through life where it's living week to week or paycheck to paycheck or anything like that."

These differences are as palpable to the working class men I have talked to as is the worker/professional divide to professional people. Upper- middle class descriptions of undesirable people rarely focused on irresponsible people. They

focused more on other middle class people than on lower class people, as if these violent types or unstable workers were simple outside their universe of reference.

(4) Boundaries drawn on the basis of race

When drawing class boundaries on the basis of moral character, white lower-middle class men also often draw racial boundaries because African-Americans, or North African immigrants, are often viewed as the main culprits of vandalism, violence, and so forth. It is in relation to these groups that the men I talked to, both in France and the United States, tend to draw the strongest moral boundaries. They lump together a large part of the black population, viewing it as a group of lazy, irresponsible welfare recipients. I have numerous quotes in which the same moral argument is made over and over again and interviewees constantly shift between moral and racial boundaries, drawing these simultaneously. Some, like this warehouse worker, explicitly stressed deviance as a form of low status signal when he explained to me that

Most of them are not honest. I see that in everything they do. They don't have integrity. Most, I'm saying, I'm not even saying some, I'm saying most. They shift with the moon... The ones in this area specifically (Patterson, NJ). The ones that I've grown up with, who come from the socioeconomic background that I am accustomed to, I do not like and I do not trust. There are exceptions,...

I know I have some attitudes and I'll maintain them the rest of my life. Mine are not prejudged. I've lived thirty five years and then judged. (If I had grown up in the suburbs), I'd be more naive and sympathetic towards them as blacks because I wouldn't know first and what it's like to live amongst them...

In the view of this second man, a storage worker, African-Americans are morally flawed because they lack ambition. He explained to me that he is racist but

being black or Puerto Rican or Irish or anything else really doesn't have anything to do with it. It's when you fit the stereotype of being black. You know, with one pantleg rolled up, the baseball hat on backwards, the eighth-ball jacket, the whole thing with the zig zag haircuts, all that stuff, you try and act the typical type, that's what I really hate. You gotta put up with it. I put up with it on the job... but there's nobody in my neighborhood really like that...

They're happy they've got a job where they make a couple of bucks and can go

our out and drink or do whatever they want to do. Like the guys I work with. They're happy working in the warehouse, and to them they'll do it for the rest of their lives. I don't even want to drive the trucks. Hopefully, in like ten or fifteen years, I won't have to work. Hopefully my two-family house will make more money or I'll be able to have enough money where I can do something else.... I'm happy to get overtime but they could care less if they get overtime. They get regular straight pay and to them at five o'clock, "I go home" no matter what. It does not matter that there's a truck that has to be unloaded.

An electronics technician offers a similar argument when he explained to me why he is prejudiced:

What's a nice way to put it... I get very disturbed. .. I know this is a generality, and it does not go for all, it goes for a portion. It is this whole unemployment and welfare gig. Who you see mostly on there is blacks. I see it from working with some of them and the conversations I hear, there's a lot of people, a lot of blacks on welfare who have no desire to get off it. Why should they? It's free money.... I can't stand to see my hard-earned money going to pay for someone who wants to sit on their ass all day long and get free money. That's bullshit. And it may be white thinking but hey! I feel it's true to a point.

I see these racial boundaries as an extrapolation of the moral boundaries that these men used to evaluate everyone. Indeed, the standards the white lower middle class men I interviewed use to evaluate blacks are very similar to the ones they use to evaluate upper-middle and lower class people. In all cases, they stress virtues such as responsibility, hard work, solidarity, and so forth. Several even told me that they discriminate against blacks only to the extent that they deviate from their own moral norms: As a truck driver puts it:

If you're a nice person and you treat me nice, and you and I get along, great. If you treat me bad, you're nasty, and you are a miserable person, then I try to decide for my own how people are and how I'm going to deal with people, and it doesn't matter if you are black or white. Or pink or purple or yellow or green. If you're a miserable SOB, you're a miserable SOB, no matter what color you are.

This observation might lend credence to theories of symbolic racism that argue that racism is the result of minority groups being perceived as violating the norms of majority groups.¹⁰ It is my feeling that these white working class men cannot give up their moral standards because in their view these very standards are often the only thing they have to separate themselves from the lower class and the only thing that, in their view, allows them to maintain a sense of security in the often very dangerous environment they live in. These symbolic boundaries might be as important to their own definitions of their social positions as is education for the definition of the position of the upper-middle class.

Most of these lower middle class workers are more familiar with black people than upper-middle class people are, in part because their work puts them in close contact with a larger number of black coworkers, and because their neighborhoods are often adjacent. They tend to speak highly of the black people they know personally, and they tend to differentiate clearly between them and other blacks. For instance, someone who works for Exxon says:

Don't forget now, no matter who you are at Exxon, you are making pretty good money. So it's not like you've got a disadvantaged person. Their kids are going to good schools, they're eating, they're taking vacations because of Exxon and we all have, except the new people, everybody's got ten, twenty years of service. We are all on the same economic level there so you don't see a lot, you don't have the one kid that's not dressed as well as the other. You don't see divisions or whatever... With black people you talk about sports, you talk school, you're all in the same boat. It isn't like "What is it like to have a new car?" or "My kid can't go to that school." You know you talk to the guy and you went on vacation and he went on vacation.

These men tend to stress how attitudes vary from one individual to another. Yet, they also tend to lump the blacks they don't know in the one group. They also appear to have difficulty making finer distinction within the lower echelons of society in the same way

¹⁰McCohahy and Hough (1976) and Kinder and Sears (1981). Students of symbolic racism have yet to provide a comprehensive study of the extent to which minority norms are different from majority norms. This task can be achieved by examining the patterns of symbolic boundaries typical of minority and majority groups, the relative salience of racial boundaries in the mental maps of the respondents, and the interaction between racial boundaries and other criteria used to evaluate status.

that upper-middle class people tend to lump working class people together, ignoring the distinction between stable and unstable working class people that is so central to working class men. Interestingly enough, race, ethnicity, and deviant behavior were not very salient bases for boundary work in the interviews I conducted with members of the upper-middle class. Again, upper-middle class men appeared to be more sensitive to differences between themselves and other upper-middle class people, that is, between themselves and people who were slightly less educated, refined, successful, than to interclass differences, as if their reference group were composed more exclusively of people like themselves.

(5) Conclusion

What conclusions should be drawn from this preliminary analysis? It appears that the patterns of boundary work that prevail in the lower-middle class differ from those that prevail in the upper-middle class and that lower-middle class men often define themselves and their worth partly in opposition to the boundary patterns adopted by the upper-middle class. They also define their worth against the upper-middle class whom they often perceive as dishonest, immoral, and obsessed with upward mobility. Indeed, they attach somewhat less importance to socioeconomic boundaries than do upper-middle class people and they also stress moral boundaries, valuing attitudes such as solidarity, responsibility and work ethic.

The lower-middle class men I talked often draw moral and racial boundaries simultaneously, linking low moral status -- deviance, irresponsibility, laziness, drugs and alcohol abuse -- to the black population at large. In doing so, they mobilize the same criteria of evaluation that they use to assess the worth of upper-middle and lower-middle class people. However, they downplay the cultural heterogeneity of the black population and describe black individuals they know well as exceptional.

More work is needed to understand exactly the extent to which these boundary patterns and the content of boundaries themselves vary across nations, classes and racial groups -- for instance whether African-Americans use high status signals different from those used by European-Americans. More work is also needed to understand the shape that boundaries take in France and the United States, whether for instance, we find loosely or tightly bounded moral classification systems in both countries. Addressing these questions will allow a better understanding not only of differences in class culture within countries

but also of the degree to which national cultures are homogeneous (e.g., to determine whether working class culture remains more differentiated from upper-middle class culture in France than it is in the United States)

These contributions will enrich our understanding of the largely neglected cultural dimension of the inequality system. It will also facilitate understanding of cultural national differences, that is, national differences in patterns of boundary work. By comparing the relative salience of moral, cultural, and socioeconomic signals in both countries, I hope to improve our knowledge of cross-national differences in the nature of class and its salience in the way people estimate people's worth. These are some of the topics that I plan to examine over the next few years.

Appendix

Miscellaneous Theoretical and Methodological Specifications

1. Boundaries and identity have occupied the center stage of recent poststructuralists, postmodernists, and feminist debates. All three currents are concerned with the role played by meaning in legitimizing differences and inequality. In line with Derrida's thought, these writings conceptualize meaning and identity as plural, "decentered", and relationally defined, i.e. as defined through changing boundaries, in opposition to other meanings against which they take on their own significance. Or else they are concerned with the fragmentation of definitions of reality, with how various groups (race, class, gender) contribute independently to the waving of disjuncted cultural codes. Similarly, I analyze the polysemy of boundaries, i.e. the relative salience of various identities (races, classes, religions, genders, levels of education, or moral character). However, while post-structuralists, postmodernists, and feminist writings tend to focus their attention on the intersection between power and culture manifested in race, class, and gender boundaries, I also center my attention on the role of more diffused characteristics such as morality and refinement.

2. The approach used here is a multifaceted theory of status that centers on the relationship between various standards of evaluation, and indirectly, on the dynamic between groups that produce different types of boundary work. It complements the available literature in several ways. While social psychologists have studied strategic self-presentation and impression management, focusing on various devices that people use to

promote themselves in such a way that they will be socially constructed as having valued traits, they have neglected to document high status signals themselves. Similarly, available studies of subjective dimensions of class have neglected to analyze the relative salience of class in contrast to other aspects of social identity; --just as status is not always judged on the basis of work- or occupation-related characteristics, class identity (or racial, ethnic, or religious identity) is not necessarily central to lower-middle class boundaries. Along the same lines, the post-structuralists who are concerned with identity formation and with the dynamics between race, class, and gender have neglected to study the salience of identity dimensions across contexts, and have rarely accounted for differences in cultural orientation by explanations others than the rather unsatisfactory universal relational logic that Derrida and Bourdieu, among others, advocate. My analysis should be read as an attempt to fill these various lacunae.

3. I believe that the effect of my own identity on the interviews was in some ways minimized. Indeed, I attempted to present myself with a blurred professional and national identity to limit the extent to which respondents adjust their responses to my own identity. On this topic see Lamont 1992, chap. 1.

4. Additional research is needed in order to obtain a clear understanding of the limits of this study. Indeed, we still ignore exactly how much the boundaries that people draw in interview situations correspond to the subjective boundaries they draw in real-life discussions; whether these boundaries reveal what high status signals qua high status signals are most salient, or alternatively, what traits are most salient in a specific interaction; and whether these boundaries are indicative of the full range of an interviewee's high status signals or only part of it. More research is needed to see if these boundaries are those that respondents draw against "people like themselves" or those that they draw against members of other social classes, and whether they reveal deeply seated categories or only those that are enough at the surface level to manifest themselves in interview situations. (Do these boundaries point only to superficial rules of interaction that are openly fought over, or do they also pertain to deep cultural rules, i.e. to taken-for-granted and cross-situational rules?¹¹ How can we interpret the fact that domains of

¹¹On this distinction between surface rules and deep rules, see William Sewell Jr., "Toward a Theory of Structure". To illustrate this distinction, we can differentiate between the violence of American debates concerning abortion, a highly contested topic, and the taken for grantedness of the notion that the private sexual conduct of politicians belongs to the public domain (a deep rule).

identity such as citizenship were not more salient in the answers of respondents than were their identities as earthlings, heterosexual, mammals, or carnivores? Can domains of identity not be salient for different reasons?) Moreover, we still ignore whether such boundaries are in fact always salient in routine interaction, or only salient in situations of uncertainty and ambiguity. For now, given our general lack of knowledge concerning boundary work, it seems justified to assume for heuristic purposes that the boundaries that emerge during the interviews were illustrative of the categories most immediately salient, and most central in the interviewee's mental maps. It is unlikely that these boundaries are divorced from the respondents' fundamental mental maps even if situational factors can create distortions.

5. We will also need to address the issue of the extent to which subjective boundaries lead to inequality. To accomplish this task, it would be necessary to analyze how specific external traits are translated into social profits. This would require observational research that is also beyond the scope of this study. Analyzing the relationship between subjective and objective boundaries in the workplace would require analyzing (1) how expectations for self and others vary across settings according to the display of various external traits; (2) what specific sets of signals are valued in specific types of organizations; (3) how individuals adjust their status expectations (for self and others) to the definitions of a "worthy person" that predominate in their environments; and (4) how this intersubjective process affects career trajectories.

6. In Money, Morals and Manners, I provided a multi-causal explanation for the fact that the Americans upper-middle class men I talked to are less concerned with signals of high cultural status than the French while the French put less emphasis on materialism than Americans. In my view these differences are best explained by the combination of cultural and structural factors that increase the likelihood that individuals draw on one type of cultural repertoire rather than another -- as is the case, for instance, when the presence of a strong interventionist state provides individuals greater autonomy from market mechanisms and thereby favors the drawing of cultural boundaries. In contrast to the most influential frameworks used to study national cultural differences (e.g. the "modal personality" framework), this explanation considers national cultural patterns to reside not in individual psychological traits, but in institutionalized symbolic boundaries.¹² Along

¹²Whereas the debates of the sixties surrounding the culture of poverty thesis made a distinction between structural explanations and cultural (a.k.a. natural or psychological)

these lines, studying national boundary patterns allows us to view national stereotypes as the products of differences in boundary work, or as the products of collective processes of the definition of identity. It also allows us to develop a more complex view of the differences between French and American society.

explanations, the approach used here takes cultural differences between classes to be structural, i.e. symbolic boundaries to be cultural rules that shape people's behavior. Indeed, along with Neo-Durkheimians, symbolic interactionists, phenomenologists, and neo-institutionalists I consider culture to be a form of structural constraint.

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**Table 1: Occupation and Age of Male Blue Collar and Manual Workers
(Paris and New York Suburbs)**

MAJORITY WORKERS		MINORITY WORKERS	
GALLICS	EURO-AMERICANS	NORTH-AFRICANS	AFRICAN-AMERICANS
1. house painter	30 printer	31 1. painter	57 painter
2. automobile painter	39 mechanic	40 2. mechanic	37 car inspector
3. mason	45 ironworker	43 3. mason	59 equipment operator
4. carpenter	47 construction worker	38 4. painter	42 machinist
5. automobile technician	35 mechanic	40 5. operative, car factory	46 union rep., car factory
6. locksmith	39 plumbing inspector	35 6. goldplating craftsman	50 health inspector
7. boiler maker	32 plumber	32 7. plumber	45 plumber
8. electrical technician	42 heating system specialist	59 8. skilled worker, car factory	52 assistant cable splicer
9. electronics operative	35 electrician	31 9. electrician	34 phone technician
10. heater repairman	30 stage technician	34 10. warehouse keeper, petroleum co.	55 maintenance worker
11. warehouse keeper	31 warehouse keeper	30 11. warehouse keeper	50 warehouse keeper
12. electrical appraiser	46 warehouse keeper	35 12. laborer, construction industry	53 letter carrier
13. railway technician	30 electrician	34 13. yard worker, railways	41 newspaper worker
14. subway conductor	30 train conductor	39 14. bus driver	33 truck driver
15. garbage recycling technician	38 pipefitter	58 15. meat delivery man	60 recycling plant worker
16. tire technician	54 foreman, petroleum co.	45 16. operative, car factory	50 operative, chemical co.
17. steam engine operative	35 tin factory foreman	46 17. warehouse keeper	33 chemical operator
18. radar technician	31 assembly line worker	45 18. skilled worker, air conditioner	50 x-ray worker
19. shop foreman, lamp factory	41 foreman, cosmetics plant	45 19. roofer	51 foreman, bindery
20. railway technician	37 truckdriver	34 20. screwcutter	49 worker, health industry
21. railway technician	35 truckdriver	44 21. truck driver	44 shear operator
22. bellman	32 firefighter	33 22. phonebooth cleaner	47 fumigation technician
23. phone technician	40 postal service sorter	45 23. packer, textile industry	34 sorter, mailing co.
24. cable technician	36 security system installer	51 24. handler, textile industry	34 phone technician
25. pastry maker	30 tool and dye maker	49 25. metalworker, car factory	56 paper quality inspector
26. policeman	35 policeman	34 26. hotel handyman	47 security supervisor
27. aircraft technician	36 audio technician	29 27. operative, telemechanics	54 photo technician
28. pastry chef	31 warehouse worker	63 28. worker, pharmaceutical industry	37 operative, textile company
29. butcher	55 letter carrier	48 29. laborer, road construction	48 park maintenance worker
30. cook	42 letter carrier	39 30. dressmaker	42 hospital orderly
Average age:	37	41 Average age:	45

**Table 2: Occupation and Age of Caucasian White Collar Workers
(Paris and New York Suburbs)**

FRENCH SAMPLE		AMERICAN SAMPLE	
1. bank clerk	34	bank clerk	45
2. bank clerk	40	receiving clerk	53
3. bank clerk	44	civil servant	54
4. civil servant	42	civil servant	52
5. draftsman	39	draftsman	38
6. electronics technician	31	electronics technician	38
7. postal window clerk	30	postal clerk	35
8. trainticket salesman	33	hotel industry salesman	30
9. wood salesman	40	paper goods salesman	32
10. phone salesman	41	bank supplies salesman	60
11. charcuterie salesman	51	insurance salesman	52
12. bank clerk	39	clerical worker	53
13. aircraft technician	36	broadcast technician	47
14. photographer	35	store manager	49
15. draftman	44	electronics technician	28
 Total average age:	 39		 44

Table 3: Occupation and Age of Upper-Middle Class Interviewees by Sites and Detailed Category of Occupation

PARIS SUBURBS		NEW YORK SUBURBS	
	age		age
public school administrator	50	public school administrator	58
academic administrator	57	academic administrator	50
music teacher	41	earth science teacher	46
priest	43	minister	51
museum curator	53	museum curator	44
musician	42	artist	48
science teacher	46	science teacher	53
professor of architecture	31	professor of social work	49
literature teacher	57	professor of theology	57
social worker	35	recreational professional	33
diplomat	55	civil servant	58
computer specialist	33	computer specialist	34
professor of accounting	39		

2. Cultural and Social Specialists, Private Sector, Profit-Related Occupations, Public and Nonprofit Sectors

human resource consultant	38	applied science researcher	42
psychologist	44	human resources consultant	41
hospital administrator	60	psychologist	50
dentist	34	hospital controller	39
physician	46	statistics researcher	46
architect (public)	43	computer researcher	36
human resources consultant	59	economist	52
		labor arbitrator	53
average age (cat 1 and 2)	45	average age	47

3. Profit-Related Occupations, Private Sector (Salaried)

business management specialist	46	investment advisor	31
senior executive manufacturing	58	chief financial officer	56
banker	45	banker	44
investment banker	40	banker	59
insurance executive	42	insurance company VP	44
corporate attorney	36	plant facilities manager	40
computer engineer	51	corporate attorney	41
marketing executive	55	computer specialist	52
electrical engineer	42	marketing executive	45
tourism executive	43	computer software developer	53

4. Profit-Related Occupations, Private Sector (Self-Employed)

lawyer	39	lawyer	34
lawyer	45	lawyer	42
accountant	57	portfolio manager	46
architect	46	computer consultant	46
insurance broker	45	realtor	51
proprietor printing firm	56	custom house broker	57
proprietor engineering firm	47	wholesale distributor	55
accountant	40	proprietor broadcasting co	49
accountant	37	proprietor car leasing co	45
lawyer	47	machine tool distributor	35
average age (cat 3 and 4)	47	average age	46

