

tive capital that produces surplus-value. Wage-earners who depend on the sphere of the circulation and realization of surplus-value do not form part of the working class, since these forms of capital and the laborer who depends on them do not produce surplus-value.²⁷

For Poulantzas, the working class is defined by the fundamental class antagonism within capitalism between direct producers, who are separated from the means of production and produce the social surplus product in the form of surplus-value, and the bourgeoisie, who own the means of production and appropriate surplus-value. Accordingly, unproductive wage-earners while clearly not members of the bourgeoisie, do not contribute to the production of surplus-value. Thus, they are not directly exploited in the form of dominant capitalist relation of exploitation and so, Poulantzas argues, cannot be included in the working class.²⁸

The arguments with regard to the boundaries of the working class have focused, thus far, on economic criteria. But social classes are defined not only by economic, but also by political and ideological criteria as well. It is in Poulantzas' analysis that this point is most seriously considered. Perhaps the most distinctive premise underlying Poulantzas' analysis is that classes are structurally determined, not only at the economic level, but at the political and ideological levels as well. While it is true that the economic place of the social agents has a principal role in determining social classes, their position in ideological and political relations of domination and subordination may be equally important. Based on all these theoretical considerations, Poulantzas' basic conclusion is that only manual, non-supervisory workers who produce surplus-value directly (productive labor) should be included in the proletariat.²⁹