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CLASS OF '84: CLASS STRUCTURE
AND CLASS AWARENESS
IN NEW ZEALAND, 1984

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ABSTRACT

In 1977, an American Sociologist, Eric Olin Wright, launched an international survey project which aimed to "investigate the contours of class structure and class consciousness in the western World." In 1983, the Social Science Research Fund Committee (SSRFC) funded the New Zealand component of the international project; the 'Jobs and Attitudes' survey. The unique aspect of these projects is the way that they integrate contemporary neo-Marxist theory with a survey technique, through a theoretically-designed questionnaire.

Drawing on this theory/data base, this thesis investigates the extent to which class consciousness has developed from the class structure in the specifically New Zealand context, 1984. The predominant finding is that there is a certain tendency for class consciousness to co-vary with class structure. This tendency is stronger for the owning classes - capitalists, small employers, petty capitalists - and weaker for the working class. This, it is argued, lends support to the conception that a class structure offers the potential for the development of consciousness, but does not fully determine class consciousness.

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