

# Class in the Information Society: Socio-economic reproduction in the new media environment

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# SUMMARY

This thesis argues that class analysis contains important tools for analysing contemporary socio-economic inequality in the new media environment. For research seeking to promote the reduction of inequality, the Marxian class analytical tradition has two important features: i) it identifies collectively-held interests in contrast to the methodological individualism of neo-classical economics, thus providing a basis for political action; and ii) it understands those interests as relational and socially constituted, and therefore processual and able to be changed. Class analysis has declined in effectiveness due to its failure to respond to critiques emanating from identity-based “new social movements” (e.g. feminism, anti-racism, etc.). These critiques have required “universalist” social theory such as classical Marxism to reflexively understand its cultural and historical specificity. I argue that such an understanding is becoming possible through analysis of the role of information in the economy. The evidence suggests that the economy is fundamentally a cultural/informational entity, rather than a base for a cultural/ideological superstructure. The thesis attempts to rethink the fundamental processes of class theory from a cultural perspective to yield a class analytical framework that will be useful for those excluded from the dominant networks of economic and cultural exchange.

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I hereby declare that this thesis constitutes my own work (except as referenced) and has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.