Trade Cohesion, Class Unity, and Urban Insurrection: Artisanal Activism in the Paris Commune

Roger V. Gould
University of Chicago

Sociologists and historians generally agree that working-class protest in 19th-century France relied on the close-knit networks and corporate solidarity of artisanal trades. But urban uprisings invariably mobilized workers from a broad range of trades, a fact which some scholars have interpreted as evidence of growing class consciousness among French workers. This article shows that social organization within trade groups cannot account for insurgency in the Paris Commune: workers from close-knit occupational groups participated at lower rates than those in weakly organized trades. The reason was that Parisian workers were mobilized for insurgency through neighborhood networks, not through their membership in craft groups. The disappearance of trade boundaries during insurrections did not, therefore, reflect the emergence of class unity, but rather a shift from trade to neighborhood as the organizational framework for the mobilization of protest.

The revolutions of 1830, 1848, and 1871 in France have meant a lot to sociologists and historians studying working-class protest. The fact that the rank and file of these uprisings consisted of workers from a wide range of occupations has suggested to many that labor militancy underwent a transformation during the middle of the 19th century, as narrow, old-regime trade loyalties yielded to a generalized allegiance to the working class as a whole (Aminzade 1981; Katzenelson 1986; Perrot 1986; Sewell 1986). According to this view, the participation of diverse trades in

---

1 This research was supported by fellowship grants from the National Science Foundation, the Krupp Foundation, the Social Science Research Council, and the French Government's Chateaubriand Fellowship program. I thank Tom Ertman, Roberto M. Fernandez, Patrice Higonnet, Peter V. Marsden, Theda Skocpol, Harrison C. White, and the AJS reviewers for their helpful comments. Direct correspondence to Roger V. Gould, Department of Sociology, University of Chicago, 1126 East 59th Street, Chicago, Illinois 60637.

© 1993 by The University of Chicago. All rights reserved.
0002-9602/93/9804-0001$01.50
urban insurrections reflected—and also helped crystallize—the emergence of class consciousness among French workers.

This argument often appears in studies that provide convincing support for what Traugott (1985) has called the "thesis of artisanal activism"—that is, the thesis that craft communities played a pivotal role in the mobilization of working-class protest. The militants of 19th-century France (and other European societies as well) were not the industrial proletarians of *The Communist Manifesto* (Marx and Engels [1848] 1967) or *The Civil War in France* (Marx [1871] 1940), but rather skilled handicraft workers with long-standing corporate traditions. The cohesiveness of these occupational groups constituted the principal source of solidarity in the French labor movement during the 1800s (Shorter and Tilly 1974; Tilly, Tilly, and Tilly 1975; Moss 1976; Hanagan 1980; Sewell 1980; Aminzade 1981). As a result, militant workers framed their struggle against capitalist development in terms of narrowly defined occupational identities: working-class organizations typically emerged during strikes and took the form of trade-specific mutual-aid societies and producers' cooperatives (Perrot 1974; Sewell 1980; Tilly 1986; see also the short accounts of a large number of such episodes that appear in Ministère du Commerce [1904]). In the utopian vision that dominated French socialism from the 1830s until the end of the century, cooperative ownership of the means of production would gradually replace private property and forge a postcapitalist society governed by a council of worker-representatives from each trade (Moss 1976; Sewell 1980; see Freymond [1962] for evidence of the way this vision developed in the French section of the International Workingmen's Association).

This leads to a puzzling question. If craft communities provided the key social foundation for labor militancy throughout the 1800s, how is it possible that during the same period craft loyalties gradually dissolved and were ultimately replaced by universal class consciousness as the basis for collective action?

I argue that it is not possible. If the cross-trade nature of urban insurrections had been the result of a decline in importance of occupational loyalties, then the dissolution of trade boundaries should have been apparent in smaller-scale forms of protest as well. Yet the labor movement that reemerged in the 1860s after a decade of repression under Louis Bonaparte was as segmented along trade lines as it had been before 1848. Labor protest following the Commune similarly failed to exhibit

---

2 In this article, I shall use the terms "artisanal worker," "skilled craft worker," and "handicraft worker" interchangeably. The persistence of handicraft production in French industry in the late 19th century makes these terms largely synonymous (see Hanagan 1977).
significant signs of class unity. While workers’ organizations occasionally contributed to each other’s strike funds, these instances of cooperation were rare until the emergence of revolutionary syndicalism in the 1880s; intertrade antagonism was much more common, as when members of rival orders of *compagnonnage* brawled in the streets or skilled construction workers excluded unskilled excavators (*terrassiers*) from their unions (Perrot 1974; Moss 1976; Hanagan 1980; Price 1987; Gould 1990).

Conversely, if trade communities were a key factor in mobilizing artisanal participation in uprisings, why do we not observe the same kind of trade segmentation in these events that we see in industrial conflict? Why, for instance, were there no trade-specific barricades in 1848 or single-occupation National Guard units in 1871? Because the artisanal activism thesis focuses on the cohesiveness of craft groups in explaining the full range of protest activities in 19th-century Europe, it has difficulty making sense of this difference between insurgency and small-scale labor strife.

In this article, I offer an answer to this puzzle that avoids the claim that craft solidarity was declining at the same time that it provided an enduring organizational resource for activism. I argue instead that insurrections were able to bring workers from a variety of trades together because the mobilization of urban insurgency did not depend on craft-group cohesion. Using data on rank-and-file insurgents in the Paris Commune of 1871, I show that, while skilled craft workers did indeed play a prominent role in the uprising, it was not because they were integrated into cohesive occupational groups. In fact, the most organized and solidarity crafts were systematically underrepresented in the ranks of insurgents. Net of other factors, the most active participants in the insurrection were artisanal workers from weakly organized trades.

This finding can only be understood, I maintain, by recognizing that the mobilization of urban insurgency relied on the social organization of neighborhoods—networks of social ties that cut across craft communities and thus provided an alternative framework for collective action. Close-knit trade groups participated in the Commune in proportionally smaller numbers because they were more weakly tied to neighborhood networks. In contrast, occupational groups with weak craft communities were more closely linked to the associational life of the urban neighborhood and were, therefore, recruited to the insurrection at higher rates. Consequently, it is the very fact that insurrections did not rely on trade networks that explains why the rank and file of the Commune included workers from a broad range of trades; and it was also for this reason that the insurgents of 1871 came predominantly from trades that the artisanal activism thesis would characterize as the most quiescent.

Following a brief historical overview and a description of the data
sources, I present documentary evidence of the connection between craft-group cohesion and shop-floor protest, with particular emphasis on two of the largest industries in 19th-century Paris: metalworking and construction. Archival material on strikes and workers' organizations shows that occupational groups with the most cohesive craft communities and the greatest control over skills were most successful in organizing shop-floor protest in the 1860s; yet arrest records from 1871 reveal that workers from these trades participated at consistently low rates in the defense of the Commune. Moreover, regression analysis shows that this pattern holds, controlling for other factors, across the whole range of artisanal occupations.

THE PARIS COMMUNE OF 1871

When Louis Bonaparte was taken prisoner by the Prussian army at Sedan in September 1870, crowds in Paris swept away the Second Empire in a matter of hours, and without a shot being fired. A group composed principally of republican legislators formed a provisional Government of National Defense, promising a Constituent Assembly and a successful conclusion to the Franco-Prussian War. But as Bismarck's forces closed in on the capital, it became clear to the people of Paris that the government, supported by the war-weary rural population, was preparing to capitulate. Increasing anger over this perceived betrayal, combined with long-standing resentment of limitations on the city's municipal liberties, fostered a revolutionary atmosphere in Paris during the four-month winter siege. Popular calls for a republican levée en masse prompted the government to arm the Paris National Guard, a militia force consisting—at least on paper—of 300,000 able-bodied men. But this measure only led to greater frustration when the city's military governor demonstrated his reluctance to send the guard into battle. Radical and socialist activists organized working-class guard battalions into a democratic National Guard Federation, which had close ties to the city's labor movement, above all to the Paris chapter of the International Workingmen's Association.

An armistice was signed in January 1871 and was followed by a humiliating peace treaty in February. But the end of the Franco-Prussian War only led to further conflict: under the terms of the armistice, the French authorities were responsible for disarming the Paris National Guard.

3 The following account is based primarily on the secondary accounts of Lissagaray (1876) 1969, Horne (1965), Rougerie (1971, 1988), Edwards (1971), and Serman (1986). Other works on the Commune include Gaillard (1971), Greenberg (1973), and Tombs (1982).
Artisanal Activism

Revolution came when the government, under the leadership of the conservative Adolphe Thiers, tried to confiscate the guard’s artillery, which, during the peace negotiations, had become the chief symbol of Parisians’ defiance toward the Prussians and toward their own rulers (now dubbed the “Government of National Treason”). On March 18, a dawn attack on the artillery parks of Montmartre and Belleville went awry when crowds of men, women, and children surrounded the government troops and convinced them not to fire their weapons. Thiers ordered the army to retreat to Versailles along with city officials, and the National Guard Federation’s Central Committee took control of the city's public buildings.

Attempts at conciliation between the committee and the government at Versailles failed, and the following day the committee announced elections to the Commune, combining the symbolism of the Revolutionary Commune of 1789 with an allusion to the nationwide movement for municipal liberties—a movement that had already led to an uprising in Lyon and was about to spark communal insurrections in the cities of Marseilles, Toulouse, Saint-Étienne, and Le Creusot (Edwards 1971; Greenberg 1973). The Communal Council, inaugurated on March 26, quickly demonstrated its democratic socialist leanings by passing a series of progressive measures, including the establishment of workers’ cooperatives, the creation of a labor exchange in each mairie (town hall), the separation of church and state, and the abolition of night work for bakers.

While the Commune declared its solidarity with the citizens of other French cities who had mobilized their own communal movements against the Versailles government and the “rural majority,” it claimed no authority outside the walls of Paris. Still, Thiers would not tolerate what he saw as the rule of an undisciplined mob in France’s capital city, and Paris was subjected to a second siege—this time by the French rather than the Prussian army—beginning on March 30.

The link between the National Guard and the Commune made this the first French uprising in which the insurgent forces constituted a genuine military organization. Even so, guard battalions were hardly a match for the larger, better-armed, and better-trained Versailles army. The government troops, led by the Third Republic’s future president, Marshal Mac-Mahon, entered the city’s western gates on May 21; the seven days of barricade fighting that ensued have been known ever since as the semaine sanglante, or “bloody week.” Modern historians estimate that over 20,000 Parisians died during the fighting, many of them in summary executions carried out as each barricade fell to the invading army (Horne 1965; Edwards 1971; Rougerie 1964a, 1964b, 1988; Tombs 1982; Serman 1986).
For thousands of other insurgents, however, the drama had not ended. The army arrested more than 36,000 people during the fighting and in the ensuing weeks; most of these detainees spent a year in temporary prisons awaiting preliminary investigations into their cases. Ultimately, 23,000 prisoners were released without trial, while the remaining 13,000 were tried by 26 conseils de guerre, or military courts. Approximately 2,500 were acquitted; 93 received death sentences, of which 23 were actually carried out; 4,500 were deported to penal colonies in New Caledonia; 6,000 were sentenced to prison or hard labor for periods ranging from a few months to 20 years. Nearly 3,000 other suspected insurgents—many of whom had died nameless deaths on the barricades—were tried and sentenced to deportation in absentia.

SOURCES

As an ironic result of the massive repressive effort, the Commune left abundant marks on the historical record. The data used in this article are drawn from a sample of the trial dossiers preserved in the Archives Historiques de l'Armée de Terre in Vincennes, France (hereafter, "Army archives"). An initial list of arraignees was drawn up by selecting every seventh name from the Dictionnaire biographique du mouvement ouvrier français (Maitron 1968). But because the Dictionnaire biographique is based on dossiers compiled at the Ministry of Justice when convicted prisoners applied for pardons, this initial list excludes anyone who was acquitted. A separate list of acquitted prisoners was therefore drawn directly from the records in the Army archives. Because of limitations on public access to the archives' inventory of dossiers, the only way to sample acquittals was by selecting two letters of the alphabet at random and consulting all the dossiers for acquitted prisoners whose names began with one or the other of these two letters. The final sample consisted of 1,740 insurgents who received guilty verdicts, 177 who were acquitted, and 283 who were tried and convicted in absentia. In the analyses reported here, the data are weighted to compensate for the overrepresentation in the sample of convicted insurgents.

While trial records constitute the only substantial source of information on the rank and file of working-class militancy, the data derived from such records are inevitably influenced in part by the biases and preconceptions of the officials in charge of the judicial process. In the analyses

4 Actually, the enumeration process was somewhat more complicated, since the Dictionnaire biographique (Maitron 1968) contains names of labor militants who were not connected with the Commune, and who were consequently not tried by the military courts. These entries were ignored in counting every seventh name.
presented below, controls are used wherever possible to correct for the bias introduced into the arraignment sample by prejudicial practices on the part of army officers and military courts. In particular, analyses of rates of participation in the Commune control for past criminal convictions and marital status, since the military courts accorded preferential treatment to detainees who were married and who had no criminal record. An extensive discussion of the nature, extent, and appropriate corrections for bias in the sample is available separately from the author.

Trial dossiers for each individual on the list were consulted at the Army archives and yielded basic demographic and occupational information as well as information concerning the defendants’ activities under the Commune. Specifically, the data set used here includes each defendant’s age, occupation, place of birth, address, marital status, number and type of previous encounters with the law, and formal rank (if any) in the Paris National Guard.

The analyses presented below focus on the determinants of insurgent participation across occupational groups; consequently, the data from the arraignment sample are initially classified into four broad socioprofessional categories: bourgeois/professionals, white-collar employees, skilled artisanal workers, and unskilled laborers (see table 1 below). In subsequent analyses that provide a more direct test of the artisanal activism thesis, skilled artisanal workers in the sample have been subdivided into 24 professional categories (see table 2 below). The other three broad socio-economic categories—bourgeois/professionals, white-collar employees, and unskilled laborers—are not relevant for a test of whether craft social organization was related to insurgency and are therefore excluded from the regression analyses. Insurgent activity among the nonartisanal population of Paris was nonetheless far from negligible; for a study that includes these groups in an exploration of the social foundations of insurgent mobilization in general, see Gould (1991).

ARTISANAL ACTIVISM AND URBAN INSURRECTION

As Traugott (1985) has pointed out, past research on the participation of urban artisans in insurrections has typically demonstrated only their absolute numerical importance; since artisans also constituted the bulk of France’s urban population during the 19th century, this leaves open the question of whether artisanal workers were disproportionately active in such events. Consequently, the first issue to address is whether artisanal workers were central to the 1871 insurrection in relative as well as absolute terms.

The figures reported below refer only to males, since the overwhelming majority of arrested insurgents were men. While this fact in part reflects
the assumption on the part of the authorities that men were more likely than women to have fought on the barricades, to a greater extent it results from the way in which participants in the insurrection were mobilized: most of the fighting both outside and inside the city was the duty of the National Guard. Some women did serve as nurses and provisioners to guard battalions in their areas, but only the men, who by decree of the Commune were required to serve if they were between the ages of 19 and 40, were supplied with arms. Thus for largely organizational reasons, the barricade fighting of 1871 was primarily limited to men.

Table 1 reports the distribution of male Parisians and arraignees falling into the categories bourgeois/professional, white-collar employees, artisanal workers, and unskilled workers. (Soldiers who were charged with participating in the insurrection because they had remained in Paris after March 18 are not included in this table; while a number of soldiers did indeed take part in the uprising, they were not part of the population of the capital and consequently do not appear in census figures.) It is immediately clear that artisanal workers are the only category that was overrepresented among arraignees: bourgeois/professionals and white-collar employees are present in the sample in proportions that are well below those for the Paris population as a whole, while the proportion of unskilled workers is roughly equal to that in the general population. In short, insurgency in 1871 was dominated by those from a working-class, and more particularly artisanal, social background. This result leaves little doubt that skilled handicraft workers were generally more active in the 1871 uprising than members of any other socioprofessional category. As far as 1871 is concerned, the broad empirical premise of the artisanal activism argument—namely, that artisanal workers were more militant overall than unskilled workers—appears to be confirmed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socioprofessional Categories</th>
<th>Paris Population*</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Arraignees†</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bourgeois/professionals ......</td>
<td>254,361</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-collar employees ......</td>
<td>144,007</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artisanal workers ............</td>
<td>396,131</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>1,521</td>
<td>63.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled workers ............</td>
<td>137,948</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total ........................</td>
<td>932,447</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2,391</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Population figures refer to males only.
† Figures correspond to total number from each category in the arraigee sample, weighted to account for underrepresentation of acquittals.
Artisanal Activism

But can this higher rate of activism among artisanal workers be attributed to craft social organization? To state the question another way, Did skilled workers form the core of the Commune's rank and file because they belonged to craft communities whose densely knit social structure helped to mobilize them into the insurgent effort? If this is the explanation, it should be possible to demonstrate that variation in participation rates across trades, but *within* the category of skilled workers, was itself positively related to trade-based social cohesion. If artisanal solidarity is to account for participation in insurgency, then we should find that artisanal crafts with close-knit professional communities exhibited higher rates of activism than crafts with weak social organization. Moreover, this relationship should hold net of other factors that might influence participation but which are not themselves connected to trade-based social cohesion. In the next two sections, I shall show that the contrary was the case: the most cohesive craft groups were most likely to have organized for shop-floor protest in the 1860s, but least likely to fight on the barricades of 1871.

Measuring Insurgent Participation

To explore the determinants of insurgent participation specifically among artisanal workers, two measures are derived from the data. First, the absolute number of people in the arraignee sample from each trade is used to estimate the number of actual participants that trade contributed to the insurrection; divided by the number of Parisians for each trade, this variable (arrest rate) estimates rates of participation for the 24 occupational groups shown in table 2.5

Interpreting arrest rates as participation rates requires two assumptions. First, it is assumed that there were no systematic differences between those killed during the fighting and those who survived; the essentially arbitrary nature of the mass executions strongly suggests that those killed had not, in general, fought more courageously or with more deter-

---

5 An ideal research design would involve a probability sample of Parisians, with a set of continuous variables measuring the extent of participation for each. As a compromise, I am forced to aggregate to the level of occupational categories and measure overall rates of participation. In one sense, however, this strategy simply makes the logic of my research more explicit than it would be in the case of an individual-level analysis: since the central question is whether trade cohesion affected insurgent mobilization, the principal variables of interest have to be measured on the level of trades. Thus, even if the individual were the unit of analysis, the key independent variables would still be defined on the group level. Also, since the independent variables are for the most part drawn from census data rather than the arraignee sample itself, selection bias should not pose a problem.
TABLE 2
MEASURES OF PARTICIPATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES AMONG ARTISANAL TRADES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational Category</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Arrest Rate*</th>
<th>Officer Rate†</th>
<th>Concentration</th>
<th>Worker-Employer Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bakers, pastry workers</td>
<td>7,200</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.305</td>
<td>2.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butchers</td>
<td>4,800</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.300</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distillers, other food</td>
<td>2,240</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.344</td>
<td>3.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painters, plasterers</td>
<td>9,100</td>
<td>5.51</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>.299</td>
<td>11.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masons, roofers</td>
<td>25,640</td>
<td>5.96</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.288</td>
<td>13.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joiners, carpenters</td>
<td>17,100</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>.304</td>
<td>12.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other construction</td>
<td>17,500</td>
<td>5.99</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>.286</td>
<td>9.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture workers</td>
<td>33,100</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.417</td>
<td>6.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailors</td>
<td>14,000</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.413</td>
<td>7.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoemakers</td>
<td>18,000</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>.294</td>
<td>8.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other clothing, textile</td>
<td>14,400</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>.331</td>
<td>11.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machine builders</td>
<td>13,700</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>.307</td>
<td>17.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundry workers</td>
<td>3,100</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.497</td>
<td>6.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forgers, other metal</td>
<td>22,100</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>.365</td>
<td>9.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewelers</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>.536</td>
<td>6.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrument makers</td>
<td>7,100</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.361</td>
<td>3.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceramics, chemical</td>
<td>10,500</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.360</td>
<td>6.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printers, bookbinders</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>.347</td>
<td>11.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxury-goods workers</td>
<td>7,300</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.597</td>
<td>5.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbers</td>
<td>2,100</td>
<td>5.07</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.307</td>
<td>1.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carriage makers</td>
<td>7,800</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.322</td>
<td>8.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodworkers</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>.401</td>
<td>6.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanners, other leather</td>
<td>6,200</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.391</td>
<td>10.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service workers</td>
<td>13,400</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.351</td>
<td>3.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Total arraignees in trade i per 100 practitioners of trade i.
† Total arraigned National Guard officers in trade i per 100 practitioners of trade i.

mination than those who were arrested during the fighting but whose lives were spared. Second, it must be assumed that the repressive forces were not completely arbitrary in their decision to arrest and try some suspected insurgents and to release others. Analyses not presented here (see Gould 1990) show that the authorities used the insurrection as an opportunity to eradicate what they perceived as undesirable elements of the Parisian population; but these results also demonstrate that in deciding whom to release and whom to arraign the authorities made a genuine effort to distinguish willing participants in the fighting from those who had refused to take up arms or had been coerced into defending the Commune. Nonetheless, since investigating officers routinely used prisoners' past criminal records as evidence against them, and in various
other ways put into practice the dominant middle-class view that working-class protest was equivalent to working-class criminality, the proportion of each occupational group with one or more criminal convictions is included as a control in the analyses presented here.

The second measure is the rate at which each trade contributed officers to the Paris National Guard, which rallied to the cause of the Commune in the initial uprising of March 18, 1871, and which—as noted above—was principally responsible for the defense of the city against the Versailles government. Although the members of each battalion of the National Guard had elected their officers the previous autumn in preparation for the four-month Prussian siege of the capital, most units held new elections after the proclamation of the Commune (Clifford 1975). In general, then, men who remained or became officers in the guard after March 18 were perceived by their peers as worthy leaders of a largely revolutionary organization and were themselves willing to bear responsibility both for the pursuit of the Commune's opponents within the capital and the defense of the city against the French army. Again, this variable is expressed as the estimated number of National Guard officers from each trade, divided by the estimated total number of Parisian men practicing that trade (see table 2).

Independent Variables

Independent variables measuring various attributes of Paris occupational groups are derived from a 2% sample of voters in 1871 electoral lists (Archives de Paris, Listes Électorales), 1866 census data (Statistique Générale de la France 1869), and the insurgent sample. As individual-level information on the social characteristics of the population of Paris in this period is hard to come by, the sample of arrestees is an uncommonly rich source of data on the Parisian working class. Demographic variables derived from the arraignmente sample are the proportion of each occupational group married at the time of the uprising and the proportion with one or more previous criminal convictions. For marriages, the overall percentages are nearly equal to those for the adult Parisian population (Loua 1873). With regard to the second variable, census data provide no assistance; but because of army officers' bias against releasing people with past convictions, the proportions observed in the arraignmente sample

---

6 For the marital status variable, arrestees listed as vivant en concubinage (living with someone out of wedlock) were coded as married. Officers' reports in the trial dossiers clearly show that they viewed such liaisons as evidence of "immorality"; nonetheless, most of these arrangements were durable and stable, frequently included children, and therefore constituted marriages in all but the formal sense.
are likely to be higher than for the Paris population. Even if this is the case, however, relative differences between occupational groups will be preserved in the arraignee data. In any event, the proportion of arraignees with past convictions—about one in four—does not seem especially high for an urban working-class population, especially when it is taken into account that the majority of these convictions were for relatively minor offenses such as vagrancy, public drunkenness, and insulting police officers.

Finally, the key independent variables are measures of the extent of social organization within each occupational group. Typical measures of organizational strength, such as unionization rates, are unavailable for this period, and since most trades had organized some kind of association in Second Empire Paris, the mere presence of a formal organization is not an adequate measure. In any case, as I shall demonstrate below, what counted in determining whether members of a trade were successful in mobilizing resistance to employers was not the existence of organizations but the informal social solidarity of craft groups.

One characteristic of craft groups that profoundly influenced their social cohesion was residential concentration. Occupational groups that lived in tightly clustered communities were more likely to have dense intraoccupational social networks. Residential proximity facilitated the extension of corporate solidarity from the workplace into informal aspects of social life, epitomized in the occupationally segregated wineshop or "cabaret." These social centers facilitated the exchange of job information and occasionally even functioned as small banks (Agulhon et al. 1983). In more turbulent times, cabarets often provided the setting for the organization of protest: for instance, during the bitterly contested 1867 bronze-workers’ strike, the Paris police prefect noted that "the Commission [of the Bronze-Workers’ Mutual Credit Society] meets regularly at the establishment of the marchand de vins [wineshop owner] Pomey, 11 rue de l’Oseille, or that of Mogenier, marchand de vins at 5 rue St. Claude." Thus the geographical clustering of trade groups encouraged close-knit occupational networks, which in turn enhanced workers’ organizational resources. (I shall discuss this process in greater detail below; for other discussions of the connection between residential concentration and solidity, see Gaillard [1977], Hanagan [1980], and Scott [1974].)

Electoral lists from July 1871 were used to estimate the distribution of each occupational group among the 20 Paris arrondissements: for each of the 20 lists, occupation was recorded for every fiftieth name. Using

the distribution across all 20 districts for each occupation, residential concentration was measured using a version of the spatial clustering index proposed by White (1986; see also Massey and Denton 1988). This measure is a refinement of standard measures of concentration in that it corrects for the "checkerboard problem" by taking into account the spatial distribution of districts. For example, an occupation whose members were divided evenly between just two out of the 20 districts would receive a concentration score of 1.0 (the theoretical maximum) if the two districts were geographically contiguous, but 0.5 if they were not; if the group were divided among three noncontiguous districts, the score would be .33, and so forth. Concentration scores are reported in table 2.

A second crucial factor affecting a craft group's organizational capacity involves the degree of control workers have over the production process. There are, of course, many ways in which this variable might be measured; however, the best choice in terms of measurability across a wide range of trades is the number of workers per employer in each trade. As numerous scholars have observed, one of the central elements of artisanal solidarity throughout the 19th century was the familiarity and interdependence that emerged among artisans working together in teams or in small shops and over long periods (Scott 1974; Hanagan 1980; Aminzade 1981). Conversely, increases in the size of industrial establishments were related to the intensified division of labor, and resulting economies of scale, brought about by capitalist production (Sewell 1980). Since the division of tasks made training easier, workers in trades such as shoemaking and garment manufacture gradually lost their control over skills at the same time that the work process lost its collective quality. Thus, generally speaking, the organizational advantages of workplace autonomy dwindled as employers built larger plants, increased the division of labor, and tried to enforce factory discipline (Shorter and Tilly 1974; Perrot 1986).

Worker-employer ratio should not be confused with shop size, since the latter measure would mask the profound effects on worker autonomy of Marchandage (subcontracting) or confection, a manufacturing system in which semiskilled outworkers, many of them women, produced standardized parts for shoes or garments that were later assembled in factories. The large number of employees working at home, in near isolation,

---

8 For each occupational group, the measure is calculated as

$$\sum_i p_i \sum_j e_{ij} p_j,$$

where $p_i$ is the proportion of the group in district $i$, $p_j$ is the proportion in district $j$, and $e_{ij} = 1$ if districts $i$ and $j$ share a border, and $e_{ij} = 0$ otherwise.
presented an even greater obstacle to organization than a simple increase in the size of the average workshop. Again using 1866 census data, then, trades are characterized in the analyses below according to the ratio of male and female workers to employers.

Clearly, residential concentration and worker-employer ratio do not measure organizational strength itself, but rather two characteristics of craft groups that can be expected to have contributed to their solidarity and organizational potential. Before proceeding to the quantitative analysis of insurgent participation, therefore, it is worth demonstrating that these two factors were in fact intimately related to the effectiveness with which various occupational groups struggled against employers during the period leading up to the Commune. Because systematic information on working-class protest in this period is unavailable, I will rely primarily on qualitative evidence concerning the metalworking and construction industries.

**CRAFT COMMUNITIES AND LABOR PROTEST UNDER THE SECOND EMPIRE**

In 1864, as part of a series of liberalizing reforms, Louis Bonaparte pushed through France’s parliament a law making strikes legal. This new freedom was highly circumscribed, however: workers were permitted to go on strike as individuals but forbidden to form unions or to interfere with anyone’s “right to work.” In other words, workers were legally entitled to refuse to work but could be imprisoned for trying to coerce others into joining their strikes. The only workers’ organizations permitted under the new law were producers’ cooperatives and mutual-aid societies; even these presumably innocuous bodies were required to solicit charters from the government and clear their choices of officers with the Ministry of the Interior.

Nevertheless, handicraft workers all over France took full advantage of the 1864 decree, and within a few months the country had been seized by a strike wave that seemed to many to threaten social collapse. By November of 1864, the Paris prefect of police had already reported serious citywide strikes organized by bookbinders, armchair makers, iron founders, copper founders, bronze workers, zinc workers, and others. In the course of many of these strikes, workers founded trade-specific fraternal societies (sociétés de secours mutuels), cooperatives, and even clandestine trade unions that were to last through the decade.

But the success of strikes and the strength of organizations were by no means uniform across trades. While it is fair to say that almost every

---

9 From AN, Ser. F12 4651, Ministère du Commerce.
moderate to large occupation formed some kind of association during the 1860s, the durability of these attempts at organization depended largely on the strength of the informal craft communities in which they emerged. A more focused examination of the experiences of workers in the metal and construction industries—which together employed nearly one-third of the Parisian work force—illustrates how closely the success of protest was linked to the social cohesion and workplace autonomy of trade groups.

**Metalworking**

Of all the trades practiced in France's capital, metalworking was the one that had changed the most as a result of industrial capitalism. The development of railroads, the increasing use of iron in construction, and the growing demand for steam-driven machinery in industries like textiles and sugar refining fueled a dramatic expansion in metalworking under the Second Empire. The most visible sign of this process was the growth in size of metallurgical plants, particularly in the northern industrial regions and in Alsace and Lorraine (Clapham 1968; Duveau 1946; Price 1987). Although it was by no means the center of heavy industry in France, Paris too was home to numerous foundries and machine-building factories, some of them employing hundreds of workers. Many of the new factories were built in the suburbs, in part to evade the *octroi* tax levied within the city walls. Still, the two largest engineering and machine-building enterprises were located inside Paris: the Gouin locomotive factory, in the seventeenth arrondissement, employed 1,000 workers, while the Cail metal works, in the fifteenth, numbered 2,000 (Duveau 1946; Gaillard 1960).

Yet the appearance of large factories did not by itself signal a decline in the artisanal character of work in the metal trades. The impact capitalist development had on workers' capacity for protest varied across specific occupations in the metalworking industry and depended on the extent to which technical innovations and changes in the organization of production had eroded workers' autonomy and control over skills.

In machine construction, the demand for standardized machinery on the part of national railroad companies, textile manufacturers, and sugar refineries led industrialists to introduce growing numbers of professionally trained engineers into the production process. At the mammoth Cail works, this move led to a managerial revolution that, spurred by its spectacular effects on productivity, quickly spread across France (Nakajima 1985; Edmonson 1987). By the 1860s, most machines were designed, not by artisans using empirical, trial-and-error methods in the workshop, but by white-collar employees in a formally and physically separate draft-
ing room (*bureau d'études*). Engineers and draftsmen presented shop foremen with a completed machine design, deviations from which required formal approval by management. This change in turn facilitated the division of machine construction into a set of independent and reproducible tasks, enabling employers to train new personnel quickly (and making it commensurately more difficult for workers to maintain their hold on skills). Finally, the standardization of designs and tasks facilitated cost control through the use of rationalized accounting methods, further undermining the autonomy of foremen and the machine builders (*mécaniciens*) who worked under them. Machine building increasingly became a semiskilled occupation, with shorter training periods and higher labor turnover (Gaillard 1960; Rougerie 1971). In short, even before the Commune, industrial development was already transforming the *mécanicien* into the *métallo* of the 20th century (for a discussion of the low levels of organization among such workers in the early 1900s, see Shorter and Tilly [1974]).

In contrast, workers in some branches of metallurgy—that is, in the production of metal as a raw material—retained their hold on skills well past the turn of the century. Despite a number of advances in the efficiency of iron and steel production (of which the development of the Bessemer converter is perhaps the best known, but by no means the most central, 19th-century example), European foundries continued to rely heavily on the judgment and informal knowledge of highly skilled artisans. Chemists had achieved only a rudimentary understanding of the complex reactions that occurred inside smelting furnaces, a problem that was exacerbated by the wide range in the chemical composition of iron ore from different regions.10 As a result, employers were unable in this period to find a technological replacement for the skills of puddlers and iron founders: experience, rather than science, told the ironworker how much coke to add, what areas of the molten ore needed to be exposed to the oxidants, and when the metal had reached the proper consistency for casting into molds or for hammering into wrought-iron blooms (Daumas 1968; Vial 1967).11 It was, of course, only through long apprenticeships that new workers could be trained in foundry work, making founders

---

10 For instance, the Bessemer conversion process proved a disaster in areas where iron ore contained even moderate amounts of phosphorus; Bessemer himself had not encountered this problem because of the exceptionally low phosphorus content of the iron he had been using (Daumas 1968).

11 Indeed, the decline of puddling and foundry work was ultimately the result, not of mechanization in iron production, but rather the increasing cost-efficiency of steel. The key innovation that brought about this change in steel manufacture was the Siemens-Martin open-hearth oven, which permitted continuous casting (Vial 1967; Landes 1968; Hanagan 1980).
correspondingly difficult to replace. The combination of experience, strength, and finesse this occupation required epitomized artisanal work in 19th-century France.

Control over skills meant control over who could enter the trade, with corresponding effects on the cohesiveness and social organization of occupational groups. The resulting difference between foundry workers and machine builders is reflected dramatically in their residential patterns: 1871 electoral lists show that 71% of iron founders lived in just four adjacent districts (the tenth, eleventh, twelfth, and twentieth arrondissements), while machine builders were fairly evenly scattered across the city (cf. the residential concentration indices reported for these two occupations in table 2). Thus the autonomy foundry workers continued to enjoy in the workplace contributed directly to their cohesion as a social group: residential clustering and stability put iron founders in a much better position than machine builders to maintain the rich associational life (e.g., in trade-specific cafes and bars) that scholars have repeatedly tied to artisanal activism (Shorter and Tilly 1974; Hanagan 1980; Sewell 1980; Aminzade 1981).

While comprehensive strike statistics do not exist for the Second Empire, the details available on trades like metallurgy and machine building leave little doubt as to the relationship between workplace autonomy, craft-group cohesion, and successful working-class mobilization. As noted earlier, iron foundry workers were among the first groups in Paris to go on strike in 1864, and the clandestine union or “resistance society” (société de résistance) that emerged during this strike remained active throughout the 1860s (Ministère du Commerce 1904; Gaillard 1960). Indeed, during the national upsurge in strikes in 1869 and 1870, foundry workers organized the largest strike in the capital: beginning as a wage dispute in the Cail works, the strike quickly spread to small workshops throughout the city and stopped work for three months. The strikers' demands ultimately included the abolition of piece-rates and subcontracting, extra pay for overtime, and even worker approval of foremen nominated by management (Chambre de Commerce 1875). Foundry workers were clearly aware that the stakes included not only the rate of compensation, but the crucial organizational resource they used to collectively defend their interests against employers: control over the work process.

What did not happen during this strike was as noteworthy as what did happen. Many of the workers at Cail were not founders, but machine builders as well as forgers, turners, fitters, and others specializing in the manufacture of finished products rather than casting. Despite their support for the foundry workers, these groups did not stop work themselves; thus, even as it became citywide among iron founders, the strike failed
American Journal of Sociology

to spread to the machine shops within the Cail works. In fact, machine builders failed to organize a single large-scale strike during this period: none of the three machine-building strikes that occurred between 1864 and 1871 involved more than one employer (Ministère du Commerce 1904).

The example of the Parisian metal trades makes a compelling case for the thesis of artisanal activism as it applies to shop-floor protest: to the extent that employers succeeded, through technical and administrative innovations, in dismantling the control artisanal workers exerted in the workplace, they were able to push capitalist development even further by dampening worker militancy. On the other hand, where limitations on technology and administrative rationality left workers with tight controls over skills and training, as in foundries, capitalist development was impeded by the resulting persistence of cohesive craft communities.

Construction

Early in the 19th century, the building trades in France were still extensively organized by compagnonnage, the clandestine journeymen’s associations whose three main “sects” (the Enfants du père Soubise, the Enfants du Maître Jacques, and the Enfants de Salomon) maintained chapters in cities and towns all over the country. Masons, joiners, carpenters, and other artisans in construction or related crafts typically developed their skills through the institution of the Tour de France, which entailed traveling from town to town over a period of several years to acquire a thorough knowledge of regional specialties and trade secrets. Upon arriving in a new town, the compagnon would go directly to the mère (literally, “mother”) or local headquarters of his sect, where fellow members would house him temporarily until they could find him employment. All three sects had chapters in Paris in the 19th century; consequently, itinerant construction workers had an elaborate system of social support available to them when they worked in the capital, either as part of the tour or on a seasonal basis.

Even when compagnonnage began to decline in importance, the common provincial origins of construction workers helped them to avoid an isolated existence during their annual migrations to Paris. While in the capital, workers in these trades remained together, working at the same construction sites and lodging in the same transient hotels. Gaillard (1977, p. 201), writes: “These professions helped to transport provincial cohesion and custom to the capital: the masons, for example, who lived in a group under the leadership of one of their number and ate their meals together in the same lodging-house, re-created their province inside Paris.”

738
Artisanal Activism

After the 1840s, however, this pattern began to change, as construction workers started moving to Paris permanently with their families. At one time most masons stayed in hotels in the fourth or fifth arrondissements, in the area surrounding the Place de Grève, where subcontractors traditionally gathered to assemble work teams (Rudé 1959; Chevalier 1958). But the massive expansion of construction during the Second Empire resulted in the proliferation of such gathering places as well as the establishment of subcontracting enterprises throughout the city; combined with the increasing number of workers taking up permanent residence in Paris, this trend helped to disperse the seasonal enclave around the Place de Grève (Gaillard 1977). Electoral lists show that, by 1871, only 28% of masons in Paris lived in the fourth and fifth arrondissements, with the remainder distributed more or less evenly throughout the city (see the residential concentration figures for various construction trades in table 2). The growing population of building workers not affiliated with compagnonnage, and the division of compagnonnage itself into rival sects—a rivalry that frequently led to violent street fights (Ministère du Commerce 1904)—only served to fragment construction workers further.

These changes had a significant impact on construction workers' efforts to win concessions from employers through collective protest. The most common type of workers' organization to emerge in the building trades in the 1860s was the producer's cooperative. Although they were the cornerstone of the Proudhonist socialist vision, these associations rarely contained more than a few dozen members and never became the focus of resistance to capitalist employers. In fact, one of the largest and most successful cooperatives of the period, the Fraternal Association of Masonry Workers and Stonecutters, sided with other employers during the 1865 stonecutters' strike, thereby contributing to the strike's failure.

Workers in some of the building trades did manage to establish mutual-aid societies—the organizational form that, because of its emphasis on the creation of a common assistance fund, would have been most useful for mobilizing and sustaining strikes. But even these organizations were ill-suited to provide the basis for an energetic challenge to capitalist employers in construction. At its peak, the painters' mutual-aid society included less than one-fifth of the work force. The stonecutters' society began admitting workers from other professions soon after it was founded and within a few years had completely lost its trade character (Ministère du Commerce 1904). Even more telling, the Fraternal Society of Carpenters, founded in 1857, was completely co-opted from the outset. In their initial request for government approval, the carpenters assured the authorities that they had no plans to use their society to antagonize employers by organizing strikes; indeed, one of their chief goals was to "maintain the order so often disturbed by certain men who . . . resort to violent
means and try to take work away from those who will not adopt their ways. The founders of this society have no interest either in speculation or in conspiracy: its prosperity will benefit all its members equally, and the society undertakes not to involve itself in any matter foreign to its statutes.\textsuperscript{12}

The carpenters were true to their word. From 1857 until its demise in 1876, most of the society's officers were employers and foremen, not wage-earning carpenters. The first of its three presidents was a former carpenter turned cafe owner, and the last was a shop foreman (the occupation of the second president, who held office from 1865 to 1868, does not appear in the Interior Ministry's files). The carpenters' society remained uninvolved in strikes or other labor struggles during its 19-year existence, and the competition for members between this organization and the local chapters of compagnonnage prevented Parisian carpenters from mobilizing effectively against employers.

The documentary record shows that organizational fragmentation and residential dispersion among construction workers precluded the emergence of any significant challenge to employers in the Paris building trades during the 1860s. The integration of building workers into the urban environment diluted the solidarity that common regional origins had once provided; and the prevalence of subcontracting in the Paris construction industry prevented the emergence of that mainstay of artisanal social organization, the durable work team. In the absence of vibrant craft communities, workers' organizations failed to transcend their legally prescribed roles as providers of social insurance and, more important but less explicit, as instruments of social control in the service of the paternalistic imperial order.

This discussion could easily be extended to other industries. Tailors, in contrast to shoemakers or other clothing workers such as dyers or shirt-makers, still worked in small, unmechanized establishments and lived in a relatively concentrated area; they mounted the only major strike in the Parisian clothing trades between 1864 and 1871. Similarly, furniture workers (including the bronze workers mentioned above, but also cabinetmakers, chairmakers, and the like) maintained a close-knit artisanal community in the area surrounding the Faubourg St. Antoine and steadfastly resisted capitalist development through strikes, cooperative associations, and resistance societies (Ministère du Commerce 1904).

But it is not necessary to probe further into the stories of these industries to see that the indirect measures of craft social organization proposed above—residential concentration and worker-employer ratio—are closely related to the characteristics of handicraft trades that social histo-

\textsuperscript{12} From AN, Ser. F\textsuperscript{12} 5390, Ministère de l’Interieur.
Artisanal Activism

rians have associated with artisanal solidarity. The occupational groups that mounted significant citywide strikes in the 1860s all exhibited a combination of high residential concentration and low worker-employer ratios relative to the other trades in table 2.

Overall, then, these examples establish—as the artisanal activism thesis predicts—that the success of shop-floor protest in Paris in the 1860s depended heavily on the cohesiveness of craft communities. Craft-group organizational strength derived from two related sources: the density of intraoccupational social relations (as reflected in residential clustering) and the extent of worker control over the production process and the transmission of skills. The experience of metalworkers shows that, when capitalists were successful in using technology to attack workers’ control over skills, the resulting shrinkage of training periods and increase in labor turnover eroded the craft basis of occupational communities. Similarly, the enormous growth in the building trades under the Second Empire, together with the dispersion of locales for subcontracting and the obsolescence of compagnonnage, made it more difficult for workers to establish long-term social relations at work. At the same time, these changes in the labor market led construction workers to settle permanently in Paris, contributing to the dissolution of provincial enclaves that had governed their residential habits in the middle of the century. Thus, ironically, construction workers became less cohesive as an occupational group even as they became more thoroughly integrated with the urban community of the capital. These transformations combined to prevent significant labor struggles in the building trades during the 1860s.

None of these findings will be surprising to proponents of the prevailing view on artisanal activism. What is surprising is the following: the very trades that can be identified as cohesive, and consequently successful in mobilizing protest, joined the ranks of the Commune in disproportionately small numbers. As the data in table 2 indicate, iron founders, furniture workers, tailors, jewelers, and others who worked in small artisanal shops and lived in tightly clustered craft communities exhibited decidedly low rates of participation in the insurrection. In contrast, the highest arrest rates and officer rates are found primarily in construction, textiles (other than tailors), and machine building—the very trades described above as weakly organized.

Inferences based on this sort of visual inspection of data are risky, above all because other factors might account for the apparently negative relationship between insurgent participation and the indirect measures of craft-group cohesion used here. For one thing, the evidence just presented on metalworking and construction showed that residential clustering and capitalist control over the organization of work were themselves related. Before attempting an explanation of the anomaly of high rates
of insurgency among weakly organized trades, therefore, I show in the next section that this pattern holds systematically across Parisian occupations even when multivariate controls are introduced.

RESULTS

The bivariate correlations reported in table 3 reveal several striking relationships among the measures of participation, craft social organization, and other variables. Most notable is the high positive correlation between rate of participation and worker-employer ratio. Similarly, there is a strong correlation between worker-employer ratio and the percentage of each group serving as National Guard officers. This result contrasts with Traugott's (1985) finding that participation in the 1848 insurrection was not related to the ratio of workers to employers.\textsuperscript{13}

Table 3 also reveals negative correlations between residential concentration and both measures of participation, though in this case the correlation is fairly weak for the officer rate. Consistent with table 2 data, then, it appears that occupational groups with superior organizational

\textsuperscript{13} Tilly and Lees (1975) report that trades characterized by large workshops were more active in the insurrection of June 1848; however, Traugott (1985) shows that this result is probably a methodological artifact attributable to the inclusion of women workers in estimates of the number of potential participants in each trade (as noted earlier, women have not been included in the estimates used here). The comparison is further complicated by the fact that Tilly and Lees use actual shop sizes, not worker-employer ratios; thus trades with large numbers of domestic workers are assigned small shop sizes in their study, even though these were precisely the trades with the most workers per employer. Since Traugott did not collect new data on insurgents in the June uprising, it is clear that the research on 1848 cannot, in its present state, be compared directly with the result on worker-employer ratios reported here.
TABLE 4
REGRESSION OF ARREST RATES ON OCCUPATION-LEVEL VARIABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Parameter Estimate</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>Parameter Estimate</th>
<th>β</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>2.079</td>
<td>. .</td>
<td>1.785</td>
<td>. .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal record</td>
<td>8.713**</td>
<td>.488</td>
<td>7.360*</td>
<td>.412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3.849)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(3.810)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>6.850***</td>
<td>.648</td>
<td>5.325**</td>
<td>.504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.038)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(2.194)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native of Paris</td>
<td>5.073**</td>
<td>.501</td>
<td>3.758</td>
<td>.371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.308)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(2.380)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential concentration</td>
<td>−14.002***</td>
<td>−.858</td>
<td>−11.315***</td>
<td>−.694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3.343)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(3.653)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worker-employer ratio</td>
<td>. .</td>
<td>. .</td>
<td>.092</td>
<td>.278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(.059)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted $R^2$</td>
<td>.435</td>
<td></td>
<td>.475</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note.—SEs are reported in parentheses.

* $P < .10$.

** $P < .05$.

*** $P < .01$.

resources were actually less likely to participate in the insurrection of 1871 either among the rank and file or as officers. These patterns of covariation warrant the provisional conclusion that insurrection and economically motivated labor protest, such as strikes, differed not simply in scale or intensity, but also with respect to the kinds of groups that participated in them. In addition, the weak negative correlation between residential concentration and worker-employer ratio is at least consistent with my argument that residential patterns were themselves affected by the extent to which capitalist growth had eroded workers' control over skills.14

Tables 4 and 5 present multiple regression results for arrest rates and officer rates, respectively.15 Along with residential concentration and

14 Measuring change in worker-employer ratios over time would be preferable here. However, variations over time in the way establishments were classified and aggregated into trades make this task impracticable.

15 Since the dependent variables in these regressions are proportions, they were also estimated using (1) raw numbers of arrestees using population as an additional control and (2) logits. The inferences do not change across these alternative specifications; I report the proportions for greater ease of interpretation and to avoid inflating the variance explained.
worker-employer ratio, the regressions include as controls the proportion of workers in each trade with one or more past convictions, the proportion married, and the proportion born in Paris. The first two variables are necessary to control for selection bias in the arraignee sample, because army officers tended to favor married arrestees and arrestees with no criminal record in the decision about whom to hold for trial (Gould 1990). In addition, however, all three variables measure the extent to which individuals were embedded in sets of social relations that integrated them more or less closely with the urban community. They are included in the regression model because a given occupational group can have high or low values on these dimensions of social integration independent of any variation in the organizational capacity of the group as a whole.  

16 In fact, of course, these rates are simply aggregations of individual-level variables. This means that an effect of proportion married on arrest or officer rates does not reflect a causal process on the level of the occupational group, as long as one assumes —reasonably, I think—that these rates do not exert contextual effects on participation. Instead, it demonstrates the effect of being married on any individual's likelihood of participating in or leading the movement, independent of the occupational group he or she belongs to. Because the occupational groups exhibit variation in the propor-

---

### TABLE 5

**Regression of Officer Rates on Occupation-Level Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Parameter Estimate</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>Parameter Estimate</th>
<th>β</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>−.137</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal record</td>
<td>2.482</td>
<td>.397</td>
<td>1.780</td>
<td>.284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.490)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1.393)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>1.830**</td>
<td>.494</td>
<td>1.038</td>
<td>.280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.789)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(.802)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native of Paris</td>
<td>2.921***</td>
<td>.823</td>
<td>2.238**</td>
<td>.630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.894)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(.870)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential concentration</td>
<td>−3.929***</td>
<td>−.687</td>
<td>−2.534*</td>
<td>−.443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.295)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1.336)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worker-employer ratio</td>
<td>. .</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.048**</td>
<td>.412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( )</td>
<td></td>
<td>(.022)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted $R^2$</td>
<td>.311</td>
<td>.429</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$N$</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** SEs are reported in parentheses.

* $P < .10$.

** $P < .05$.

*** $P < .01$.
Artisanal Activism

effects on insurgency of specifically trade-level factors cannot be evaluated accurately without controlling for individual-level forms of social integration that may have affected participation.

Regression results for both arrest rates and officer rates generally confirm the impressions given by the zero-order correlations. Contrary to what the artisanal activism thesis would predict, concentration has a significant negative effect on both measures of participation, indicating that workers in residentially dispersed trades were more likely to take part in the uprising. When worker-employer ratio is included in the model without controlling concentration (results not shown here), its coefficient is positive and significant; when both are included, the effect of each is attenuated (though the effect of concentration remains statistically significant at the .01 level), which indicates that their effects on participation were intertwined. This finding supports the argument that residential clustering was itself affected by changes in labor markets and the organization of work.

Note that the positive effects of proportion married and proportion native to Paris do support the individual-level side of the artisanal activism thesis, that is, occupational groups whose members had personal ties that rooted them more firmly in the community as individuals were more likely to participate in collective protest, contrary to the “dangerous classes” perspective of earlier scholars (Chevalier 1958). To the extent that an occupation was integrated as a craft, then, it provided relatively few insurgents; but to the extent that its members were themselves integrated with the urban community, they were more likely to participate in the insurrection. The effect of proportion married, which is significant at the .05 level in three of the four models, is particularly noteworthy given that married arrestees were more likely to be released without trial because of leniency on the part of the military courts (Gould 1990); without this confounding factor, the effect of this variable would probably be larger.

As expected, the proportion of a trade with past criminal convictions has a positive, though relatively weak, effect on arrest rates. However, the coefficient for criminal convictions is not a significant predictor of officer rates, indicating that marginal individuals were less likely to be elected as officers by their battalions. These effects are consistent with the argument that arrestees’ criminal records exerted an influence on the military court’s decision to try or release a suspected insurgent. Prisoners who had been arrested in the past, most often for crimes such as va-

---

Note: The text continues from here, discussing the implications of these findings and the role of concentration in the context of artisanal activism.

---

745
granty, drunkenness, and petty theft, were more likely to be held for trial and are thus overrepresented in the arraignee sample; if this bias were removed, it is likely that the coefficient for crime would be negative, at least for officer rates.

Overall, the results for the two sets of regression models are similar in terms of the direction of the variables' effects, with some differences in the relative sizes of these effects. Most important, worker-employer ratio and residential concentration are strong predictors of arrest rates and officer rates, but in a surprising direction: residentially cohesive craft groups working in small shops (or in trades with limited putting-out production) were, relatively speaking, absent from the ranks of the insurrection. But, while cohesive trade groups participated at lower rates in the uprising, the positive effects of proportion married and proportion native to Paris show that insurgents were more likely to be socially integrated as individuals.

DISCUSSION

These results send a strong and, from the point of view of the orthodox perspective on artisanal activism, troubling message. If the artisanal activism thesis were correct with respect to working-class involvement in urban insurrection, we would have observed that the most active trades were those with the greatest residential cohesion and lowest ratios of workers to employers. Instead, the data demonstrate the contrary: craft-group organizational capacity, as measured through these two variables, was negatively related to participation in the 1871 insurrection.

In the words of Shorter and Tilly (1974, p. 273), the essence of the dominant view on artisanal activism is that "the motors of militancy are set in motion not by the marginal, the unintegrated and the recently arrived, but by workers who belong to firmly established networks of long standing at the core of urban industrial society." As elaborated by numerous later writers, this view identifies these "firmly established networks" as craft communities, groups of workers held together by a shared professional identity and traditions of corporate solidarity. This solidarity, along with the control over skills and the production process that artisanal workers maintained, is thought to have furnished the organizational resources that were crucial to working-class protest in 19th-century Europe.

As the experiences of foundry workers, tailors, and furniture workers demonstrate, this account is well suited to explain patterns of labor protest in Paris in the 1860s: workers in trades with the best-preserved artisanal communities were the most successful in organizing strikes and winning concessions from employers (see also Moss 1976). But the data
Artisanal Activism

presented here make it clear that the same logic cannot explain militancy in the Paris Commune: insurgents were most likely to belong to trades—such as construction, machine building, and shoemaking—with weaker organizational resources and a correspondingly limited level of strike activity.

This finding does not, however, warrant a return to the idea that insurgents were recruited disproportionately from among marginal elements of the urban population (see Moss [1976] for an example of this argument). As table 1 showed, artisanal workers overall were more likely candidates for insurgent participation than unskilled day laborers, who were decidedly less integrated into the urban life of the capital. And within the artisanal category, occupational groups whose members tended to be married or were native to Paris were more heavily represented in the insurgent ranks.

What, then, explains the finding that trade-based social organization, which constituted the foundation of industrial protest, did not facilitate the mobilization of an uprising that was populated in general by socially integrated people? In the introduction, I hinted at an answer by observing that the urban insurrections that occurred in France during the 19th century differed critically from institutionalized protest insofar as they exhibited none of the customary signs of trade divisions.17 Indeed, even the Lyon uprising of 1834, which is usually referred to as an uprising of the silk weavers, was really a movement of workers in general: despite the fact that the events leading up to the insurrection involved a specific conflict between silk weavers and silk merchants, the arrested insurgents were drawn from the entire range of Lyonnais trades (Bezucha 1974; McDougall 1978). This feature of urban uprisings suggests strongly that insurgency relied on a different social-structural foundation from that which underlay industrial protest: if this had not been the case, insurgency would have been subject to the same trade cleavages that characterized strikes, mutual-aid societies, and political demonstrations.

The different social foundation in question was the neighborhood. In an earlier paper (Gould 1991), I showed that insurgent mobilization in the 1871 uprising was intimately tied to the dense system of social relations that characterized working-class neighborhoods. Urban insurrections throughout the 1800s, both in France and elsewhere in Europe,

17 To be precise, it was really only the barricade fighting that showed no traces of trade consciousness. In both 1848 and 1871, workers’ political activity and social experiments such as producers’ cooperatives displayed a very strong trade orientation. It would consequently be misleading to speak of the uprisings in 19th-century France as episodes in which trade consciousness suddenly vanished, only to reappear after the revolutions had been crushed. Of course, this fact only makes the irrelevance of trade boundaries to revolutionary street fighting all the more noteworthy.
American Journal of Sociology

were organized around the construction of barricades to seal off the popular quarters from the forces of order; thus it is not surprising that insurgent mobilization should have depended on neighborhood rather than trade solidarity. In 1871, the importance of the neighborhood, or quartier, was enhanced, and to some extent altered, by the dominant role of the Paris National Guard in the insurgent effort; nonetheless, since the National Guard recruited according to residential area, its organizational strength was itself dependent upon the social structure of the quartier. Social pressure to report for guard duty derived from the fact that one’s fellow battalion members were also one’s neighbors.\textsuperscript{18} Failure to participate in the insurgent effort was construed as a betrayal of loyalty to the neighborhood and was sanctioned accordingly. For instance, one of the Commune’s police commissioners, in filing one of his weekly reports, recounted the following street conversation between a priest and a National Guard sergeant who had acknowledged that he had the resources to flee Paris if he wished:

“What!” said the priest, “you have twelve thousand francs in income, and you go along with these people?” [indicating the other guardsmen in the battalion]. “I can’t leave,” said the sergeant, “because what would my comrades from the quartier say?” [Quoted in Dauban (1873), p. 104]

This theme also runs through the testimony of arrestees, whose references to neighborhood pressure to join the insurgent effort occur too often to be dismissed as mere fabrication. Take the case of Alexandre Beaumont, a young shoemaker:

\textbf{Q}: Why did you join the guard?
\textbf{A}: I had run out of money. Not only that, in my building there were a lot of fédérés [men belonging to battalions in the National Guard Federation] who had already threatened to make me sign up.\textsuperscript{19}

Similarly, Joseph Lasserre, a 49-year-old mason living in the twentieth arrondissement, claimed that he tried to stay home during the “bloody week” but could not.

On May 21, the day the Versailles army entered Paris, I was in my neighborhood. The next morning I stood guard at the barricade on the corner of the chaussée Ménilmontant and the rue Puebla, where I stayed until the 26th. Then I went home, but on the morning of the 27th I went back to the barricade, having been forced by the National Guards of the quartier who had come to get me at my house.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{18} It is instructive to note the high arrest rate for barbers, who were inescapably tied to neighborhood life by virtue of the role their workplace played as a center of sociability. I am indebted to an anonymous reviewer for this observation.

\textsuperscript{19} Army archives, 19th conseil de guerre, dossier 371.

\textsuperscript{20} Army archives, 7th conseil de guerre, dossier 440.
Artisanal Activism

Whether the social sanctions encouraging participation are characterized as “solidary incentives” (McAdam 1982) or as coercion, the role of neighborhood social ties was pivotal. But this does not explain why trade solidarities did not also contribute to insurgent mobilization. After all, just because insurgency was mobilized along neighborhood lines does not mean that social cohesion within craft groups could not have provided a secondary basis for recruitment to the insurrection. The various dimensions along which social relations were patterned could simply have worked together to promote participation in collective protest.

The reason they did not work together is that the social organization of the Parisian working-class quartier and artisanal craft communities did not simply coexist but rather competed with each other as bases for social integration. The more cohesive a craft group was, the easier it was for its members to associate in occupation-specific bars and cafes located near their places of work, as the bronze-workers’ case shows; and this associational life facilitated industrial protest, which in turn strengthened trade identities and solidarities even further. Workers in residentially (and thus socially) dispersed trades were, in contrast, more likely to establish links to their neighborhoods in general. This pattern is best illustrated by the transformation of construction workers from a close-knit seasonal group clustered near the Place de Grève to a permanently established population scattered across a broad range of neighborhoods. Likewise, the emergence of large machine-building firms in a variety of areas outside the traditional artisanal districts—older metalworking shops were concentrated in the east of Paris, in the area known as Folie-Méricourt (Nakajima 1985), while Cail was located in a southwest neighborhood and Gouin was in the north—spread workers around the city, breaking up the social ties that constituted the craft group. In the clothing trades, a different process produced the same result: the increasing use of domestic outwork in the manufacture of shoes, shirts, dresses, and the like reduced the residential clustering of workers in these trades and, even more important, replaced social interaction in the workplace with interaction at home. In all these cases, then, erosion of trade-specific social networks opened the way for social integration with the neighborhood as such.21

This competition between trade and neighborhood was the crucial fac-

21 Note that even those industries with the highest levels of residential concentration, such as jewelry manufacture, coexisted geographically with a multitude of other crafts; no Parisian neighborhood could be identified with a single trade. In this respect, Paris and other large French cities were quite different from smaller single-industry communities, such as mining towns, where neighborhood and trade networks (and thus identities) very much overlapped. Even in Lyon, which was famous as a center of silk manufacture, silk workers accounted for only about one-third of the working population (Bezucha 1974).
tor preventing the cohesion of craft groups from serving as an additional social-structural basis for the mobilization of insurgency. Specifically professional solidarities could not contribute to a recruitment process that framed participation (Snow et al. 1986) in terms of the collective identity of neighborhood rather than trade: if two shoemakers happened to defend the same barricade, they did so as neighbors, as inhabitants of the same street or building, not as practitioners of the same craft. And, to the extent that workers in the most cohesive trades were less closely tied—socially and therefore cognitively—to the quartier, they were less responsive to a mobilization effort based on neighborhood loyalty. This explains why workers in close-knit crafts participated in the Commune at rates that were not only no higher, but actually lower, than the rates for other workers.

It is worth noting, finally, that the findings observed here cannot be the result of ideological opposition to revolution on the part of workers who had experienced success in implementing the cooperative socialist program. As many scholars have pointed out, the Commune represented exactly the form of government cooperative socialists wanted: a “democratic and social republic” dedicated to the emancipation of the working class through cooperation (Edwards 1971; Gaillard 1971; Rougerie 1971; Moss 1976; Serman 1986). By establishing a Ministry of Labor and Exchange (chaired by the Internationalist Leo Frankel) and authorizing workers’ organizations to convert abandoned workshops into producers’ cooperatives, the Communal Council placed itself squarely in the French socialist tradition. Indeed, many of the capital’s best organized trades, such as the tailors, expressed public support for the Commune’s policies.

On an ideological level, then, the Commune could not have been any more appealing to workers in the metal and construction trades than to leather workers, bronze workers, or tailors. It is the fact that trade-based protest and insurgency relied on distinct networks of social ties, coupled with the fact that the Parisian trades were differentially linked to these two types of networks, that explains the observed variation in levels of insurgent participation.

The observation that insurgent mobilization depended on neighborhood ties thus explains simultaneously why neighborhoods provided the social-structural foundation for urban insurrections and why trades did not. Social ties among neighbors were crucial to insurgency because barricade fighting was by its very nature framed as an expression of neighborhood solidarity and because workers in weakly knit occupational groups were more tightly integrated into neighborhood networks. The apparent class unity of the 1871 uprising was essentially an artifact of the neighborhood basis of mobilization: trade boundaries dissolved on the barricades
Artisanal Activism

because insurgents fought together as neighbors, not as members of specific trades.

It would, of course, be foolish to conclude that the experience of battling the forces of repression alongside workers from a broad range of trades did not contribute to class consciousness for many insurgents. While trade divisions persisted in the labor movement after 1871, there is little doubt that the violence of the Commune pushed some workers to view the world in the stark terms of a struggle between capital and labor. But this should not obscure the point that class unity fails as an explanation for the temporary disappearance of trade boundaries during insurrections. What tied workers from different occupations together in the Commune were the tangible bonds they experienced as neighbors, not the abstract bonds of joint structural position in the capitalist mode of production.

CONCLUSION

The central lesson of this research is that the insurrection of 1871—and possibly France's other urban uprisings as well—cannot be understood in the same terms as the less intense and more economically oriented kinds of activism that characterized most of the 1800s. Insurrection and industrial militancy were, of course, closely related in a number of respects; above all, both were driven in large part by a cooperative socialist vision of the future, and artisanal workers as a general category predominated in both strike activity and insurgency.

At the same time, however, certain crucial differences make it necessary to reevaluate the dominant view on artisanal involvement in social protest. As the thesis of artisanal activism argues, craft-group social organization was fundamental to the mobilization of small-scale industrial protest, giving this side of the labor movement a pronounced trade character. But these same social-structural resources dampened the participation of the most solidary trades in the 1871 insurrection by limiting the degree to which workers in these trades were integrated into a distinct network of social ties—specifically, the ties that constituted Parisian neighborhoods. As a result, the rank and file of the Commune consisted

It seems probable that, if Traugott's (1985) and Tilly and Lees's (1975) data on 1848 were reanalyzed, using worker-employer ratio and residential concentration as independent variables, one would still find that trade cohesion did not contribute to insurgent participation. However, the magnitude of the negative effect of trade cohesion might be quite different, since this effect derives from the historically specific fact that industrial development in midcentury Paris set neighborhood and trade networks at odds with each other.
disproportionately of skilled workers whose trade-based organizational resources had been insufficient to mount a successful challenge to capitalist development in the workplace. In short, it is precisely because the artisanal activism thesis provides an accurate analysis of shop-floor protest that it cannot make sense of insurgent participation in 1871.

REFERENCES


Artisanal Activism

Landes, David. 1968. The Unbound Prometheus: Technological Change and Industrial Development in Western Europe from 1750 to the Present. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

753
American Journal of Sociology


