

There's No Middle Class. ***It's The Muddle Class***

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Most people use the term '*middle class*'. But what do they *mean*? Partly, it's grouping people by personal things like speech and education they got in childhood. Or it's grouping people now, as consumers, by spending power and lifestyle. And '*middle class*' means those on mid-range income. Or it's grouping by culture and attitudes. But using upbringing, income,

consumer power and personal tastes to **class** people is flimsy and misleading.

We need to define class by more than this. We should class people by their present-day *active role in business and work*, and by their role not as a *consumer* but as a *producer*. How do they relate and inter-act with other people not just in the *consumption* of goods and services but in the *production* of them? How

do people *make* their income, make their living? Upbringing can help people *get* to positions with higher income. But we still need to need to know the everyday *relationships they* have with *us* in their current, active roles, that gets them that income.

These mean more than how people were brought up or income and role as a consumer and the lifestyle they can afford. Income has some interest as an end

result but the *process* by which people get it - or don't get it - comes first.

The universal use of 'middle class' based on upbringing and income obstructs this. It being based on income comes from the intense attention business people pay, in their marketing operations, to people as consumers. They even get us to see our role as a consumer as the main expression of our humanity!

It comes too from government's interest in income levels for taxation and provision of public services and support.

But it has diverted us from giving enough attention to *our roles in the production of goods and services and in making money or a living.*

There's more to who we are than our spending power, isn't there? Our role as consumers does not define a class. This, and upbringing and culture, are

of secondary interest to the practical reality of *how* we make our living and an income. And crucially, people's income and status as consumers usually *depends* on their role as producers. These are the roles that *determine* the allocation of money and spending power. And they are crucial to understanding the big things that go on in society, including political power.

We need to focus on the *process* by which people get their higher or lower income, not simply the *outcome*, their spending power. Just 'classing' people by that blanks out their *relationship* to you and others in production. It means the only thing you are interested in is how much money they have. Aren't you interested in how they *got* it? Because that involves their relationship to you and also relates to how

much or how little money you get.

We need to define people's class by their definite, unarguable roles in the key public roles, activities and relationships – business, work, the production of goods, the delivery of services, jobs, making money, making a living.

Do this and it is clear that there are two main classes. There are business people - the business *class* - and the rest, the working *class*. The

business class organise most of the production and sale of goods and services and organise most of our jobs. *Workers* - the majority – are the *class* who earn their living working for them, or for a public body.

‘Middle’ class based on upbringing or income *muddles* these key definitions of class. It divides the working class by putting better-off workers into the so-called ‘middle’ class. Calling workers on middle

incomes middle *class*
merges these better-
qualified and paid workers -
technicians and engineers,
admin and sales staff,
designers and managers,
teachers and lecturers - with
small business people.

They aren't middle *class*,
they are better-off workers.
Their living – their income -
depends on them getting
and keeping a job. When
unorganised, they are at the
mercy of business people
and state employers just as

much as worse-off workers, those usually called working class.

All 'middle' class means is people on ***middle incomes***. That doesn't make a *class*. Most so-called middle class people are workers. We should class them, they should class themselves, as working class.

'Middle class' *muddles* the meaning of class. It is ruinous to our ability to understand and talk about economics, work and

politics. It is disastrous for our understanding how society operates, what is done to us and what we can do about it. It masks the ultra-important, economic roles people have as *producers, making money either as business people, or as wage-earners.*

There is no middle class. It is hereby abolished! There are just the *business class* and the *working class.*

But 'middle class' is so deeply-embedded, along

with a silly understanding of 'working class', we need another term for working class, that we will come to.

There's another, *very* damaging effect of the term 'middle class'. Who are they middle *between*? If there's a worse-off working class '*below*' them, what class is '*above*' them? From how no-one speaks of one, you'd think there wasn't one. *This hides the most powerful class.*

If pushed, they might say 'the ruling class'. But which people does *that* group together? Which class *is* the ruling class? What role do they play in the key economic and political activities – the production of goods, services and jobs, and making money?

The answer is *the Business Class, business people*. Mostly manufacturers, they can include big land-owners (the ruling class before industrialism.) They are the

ruling class because they own and organise the production of most goods and services, organise most of our jobs, and run the financial system. They run most of the economy. They are most of 'the economy'. And that helps them to dominate politics. They are the class that dominates human society all over the planet. And 'middle class' achieves the remarkable feat of making them invisible!

So when people say 'middle class' - say :

- *'Base class on producer role not consumer role.'*
- *'There is no middle class'. It includes small business people and professionals but most are better-off workers. Say 'It's the muddle class'.*

Be clear about classes:

- *There's the business class - financial and corporate - down to small business. (Strictly speaking, self-employed professionals and traders too).*

- *There's the rest, mostly workers, grouped by sharing the same role in earning their living and in the economy.*

We can't rescue 'working class' from the confusion caused by 'middle class' so :

- *Let's speak of, and call ourselves, the worker class? White collar as well as blue.*
- *Deal with the confusing term 'middle class' by speaking of better-off workers and worse-off workers. Bows or Wows! You*

can add qualifications to that, with better-off, better-qualified workers; worse-off, less qualified workers. Don't talk of BOWs being middle class. They are just the better-paid members of the worker class.

- *There's cultural variations between Bows and Wows. But there also are within them.*
- *If talking about just income and consumer power, instead of middle class, just say better-off, comfortably-*

off, well-off or rich. If talking about culture or lifestyle, doesn't 'middle class' just mean 'sophistication' in language and tastes, choice of goods, holidays, clothes? These aren't important or clear enough to describe a class. And certainly not to obscure the real classes – the business class and the worker class.