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# **THE MIDDLE CLASS CONCEPT IN FRANÇOIS GUIZOT'S MEMOIRS**

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## **THE MIDDLE CLASS CONCEPT IN FRANÇOIS GUIZOT'S MEMOIRS<sup>2</sup>**

This paper reviews the “middle class” concept based on François Guizot’s memoirs. It is presented here as the results of his research and political activities. The author pays much attention to the historical and intellectual context, as well as the concept’s genetic relationship with the preceding and consequent traditions in its development.

**Keywords:** François Guizot, sociology of class, middle class, memoirs, Restoration period, doctrinaires, history of ideas.

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Attempts to write the history of the middle class concept are by no means new. Developed first by Aristotle, the concept was later elaborated by numerous early and late critics of Karl Marx's concept of the two antagonistic classes. Scientific interest in this problem in Russia and abroad was primarily demonstrated by social scientists<sup>3</sup>. It seems, however, that their negligence of historical facts, which became traditional, significantly diminished the importance of the "middle class" concept in the historical and political discourse of the Restoration Era in France. Otherwise, it is difficult to explain such a low interest in the period, when the "middle class" became a sacramental notion.

This article reviews the "middle class" concept based on François Guizot's memoirs<sup>4</sup>. Firstly, this approach would help us trace the concept development not only through the prism of philosophy as its cradle, but also in light of politics, where it gained much importance in the Restoration period and has maintained it until now. Secondly, we shall consider Guizot's memoirs as a significant source of information on the sociology of class.

### **Biography**

François Pierre Guillaume Guizot (1787—1874) was born in Nîmes into a Protestant bourgeois family. He received his first education in Geneva where his mother took him after his father's execution in 1794. Guizot returned to France in 1805 and studied Law at the University of Paris. But his interests lay beyond the scope of the chosen profession. He did translations, studied languages, learned Immanuel Kant's teaching, and got acquainted with other philosophical schools in early 19<sup>th</sup> century Germany. He wrote a critical essay on Chateaubriand, which attracted the latter's gracious attention and paved the way to a long intellectual career.

Guizot became famous for his historical essays. As early as the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they were translated into major European languages and were broadly read by the educated public. Modern American historian, A. Craitu, notes that *The History of Civilization in Europe*<sup>5</sup> was a multi-thousand copy bestseller<sup>6</sup>. But this work was something more than a bestseller, as it first introduced such concepts as "civilization" and "the middle class." In his multi-volume work *The History of Civilization in France*<sup>7</sup>, the author revealed close links between French political ideas and the French "civilization" concept. Guizot wrote it as a politician who sought answers to the topical question of his time – how can "free governance" be achieved and what is its essence? Today, these books are classic specimens of the historical genre.

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<sup>3</sup> See: Radaev, Shkaratan. 1995; Goldthorpe. 1980; Wamer. 1960 *et al.*

<sup>4</sup> Guizot. 1858-1867.

<sup>5</sup> Guizot F. Cours d'histoire moderne. Histoire générale de la civilisation en Europe depuis la chute de l'Empire romain jusqu'à la Révolution française. P., 1828.

<sup>6</sup> Craitu. 2005. P. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Guizot F. Histoire de la civilisation en France depuis la chute de l'Empire romain. 6 volumes. P., 1829-1832.

While Guizot was highly regarded as a historian by his contemporaries and researchers of his works, he was ignored as a political philosopher, despite his interests in developing a number of important theoretical concepts. His political activities began during the Restoration period. In 1830, he signed the “Address of the 221” against King Charles X’s policy. After the July Revolution Guizot became the head of the Doctrinaires to the Government, first as the Minister for Internal Affairs (1830) and later as the Minister for Education (1832–1836). Between 1840 and 1847, he actually ran the Cabinet and later, in 1847–1848, served as Prime Minister and the leader of the conservators. The downfall of his Cabinet was due to Guizot’s reluctance to change the election law, which led to the February Revolution (1848) and the collapse of the July Monarchy. While in retirement, Guizot continued with his scientific studies and wrote his memoirs.

In order to understand the development of any concept, it is significant to analyze the context within which it emerged. In our case, such a context is the social and political reality in post-Napoleonic France, with Guizot’s memoirs being the textual one.

### **Memoir**

*Memoirs of My Own Times* were published in eight volumes from 1858 to 1867 (in the author’s lifetime), and were originally designed for the general public. They can be seriously viewed as a true “modern history” that included the author’s perception of socially meaningful events in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In preparing his work for publication, Guizot probably had to smooth down and simplify some psychological points, making some corrections to the original version. For example, Guizot moderated his criticism of Napoleon I and the First Empire regime; something he had been able to afford during the Restoration Era, but couldn’t make public given the Second Empire conditions.

In spite of the fact that Guizot got down to writing his memoirs after his forced resignation in 1848, they included, without changes, a great deal of personal papers of the earlier period e.g. political and personal correspondence, speeches and pamphlets. If we compare the documents that were created in real time and reflected the thinker’s attitude towards the events he witnessed with those specifically selected for his memoirs, we can see a difference between the outlooks of the younger Guizot and the more mature Guizot. Or, to be more precise, between a theorist and a practitioner. But differentiating between Guizot-historian and Guizot-politician is not the objective of our paper as Guizot’s memoirs represent his thoughts on political activities while our paper doesn’t seek to review Guizot as a researcher. Doubtlessly, the “middle class”

concept was coined by Guizot before his active involvement in politics, and appeared as one of the elements of the social theory laid out in his historical<sup>8</sup> and political<sup>9</sup> essays.

We can note two characteristics of the *Memoirs*. Firstly, the author, as a politician, took his recollections as topical and tried to define his attitudes towards all issues relating to government. Logically, Guizot's views were less cautious and more provocative towards the government when he was in the opposition and more balanced when he was a top government official. Secondly, Guizot clearly realized that his memoirs would potentially serve as a source of information on the history of France and Europe, as evidenced by their full title and structure based on the problem-oriented and chronological principle typical for research papers.

Guizot's works, including his memoirs, are distinguished by high stylistic quality and obvious literary accomplishments that rule out editing, which was typical for texts of the Romantic historiography. This circumstance is important as many politicians employ professional ghostwriters to make their works more attractive in terms of literary style. Even though such work does not suggest editing of the book contents, there is still a question as to a degree of authorship. If the alterations are so substantial that they distort the meaning of the text then the book should be considered as fiction rather than memoirs.

Very often memoirists who hold important posts and have access to information within their competence include into the reminiscences some facts that go beyond their first-hand experience. Guizot's academic and political activities (from 1814 to 1848 he occupied a government post or was in the opposition) are the evidence of his active part in the described events and therefore of his high awareness of the situation.

### **Middle class**

Of all subjects and problems covered by Guizot in his *Memoirs*, the "middle class" is most topical today. Interest in this issue is motivated not only by academia, but also socio-political relevance. Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this concept has never left the sphere of social and political discourse and has been used – often unthoughtfully – by liberal and conservative politicians appealing to the middle class as the top class whose interests they represent. The "middle class," like almost any other social studies concept, is a sensitizing concept requiring

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<sup>8</sup> *Essays on the History of France* was Guizot's first work covering class issues and were further elaborated in his historical papers. See: Guizot, 1823. P. 4, 26, 29, 233-236.

<sup>9</sup> Guizot F. *Essai sur l'histoire et l'état actuel de l'Instruction publique en France*, P., 1816. P. 116, p. 142. In his work *On representative government* Guizot already counterpoised the "middle class" to "old aristocracy" as "equality" to "privileges". See: Guizot F. *Du gouvernement représentatif et de l'état actuel de la France*. P., 1816. P. 22. A similar idea appeared in *The Government of France after the Restoration*. See: Guizot F. *Du gouvernement de la France depuis la Restauration et du ministère actuel*. P., 1820. P. 22. In 1821 Guizot wrote about the "growing influence of the middle class". See: Guizot F. *Des moyens de gouvernement et d'opposition dans l'état actuel de la France*. P., 1821. P. 217-218.

clarification in every historical context. Not only does its meaning change over time, but it allows for co-existence of different interpretations in each period.

Today the “middle class” is defined through a number of historically formed criteria. Firstly, its members are characterized by such factors as the average national level of well-being, stability and constant income sources. Secondly, they are distinguished by a high level of education and professional qualification. Thirdly, this class is characterized by a high degree of vertical and intra-class mobility. And finally, it is distinguished by an aspiration for social stability and a mentality characterized by reformism, individualism, and the inclination to support the existing political regime<sup>10</sup>.

Having originally appeared in the Antiquity, the “middle class” category has become both an important and indefinite element of the social and political discourse in the West over the past two decades. Depending on the historical era, country, and certain perception nuances, this concept may refer to different population strata. Aristotle, in his 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> books of *Politics*, was the first to have drawn attention to this issue when exploring the causes of violent revolts and coups, as well as the conditions necessary for normal existence of the state. The great philosopher believed the formation of the “average citizens” stratum to be a remedy that would “make it possible to provide sustainable conditions for the state structure in general and to each of its groups in particular.” (Aristotle. Pol. V. 1307b). According to Aristotle, “a middle strata of the population” cannot be referred to as “upper” or “lower” classes; they can serve as a pillar of the best political structure as they wish to preserve the existing regime. But the prerequisites for the emergence of a real the middle class, as we understand it today, appeared in the early modern period; the time of the rise of the “European bourgeoisie” that was distinguished not only by a certain level of wealth, but also by its own belief system, values, and cultural needs. V. Radaev and O. Shkaratan are right in noting that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, “theories on the natural rights of oligarchs were universally replaced by the natural rights of all people for an equal share in all good in life.”<sup>11</sup> A. Smith, E. Condillac, A.C. Saint-Simon, F. Guizot, O. Mignet introduced the “middle class” concept into European social studies, but it was Guizot who began to view the middle class through the prism of theory and practice. Guizot’s concept would have been fundamental for a contemporary understanding of the “middle class”, but it remained overshadowed by Marx’s class theory.

The sources of Guizot’s views are found in the factors and circumstances that can be conditionally classified into three groups: his research work, his socio-political activities, and the social reality of post-Napoleonic France.

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<sup>10</sup> See: *Goldthorpe*. 1980.

<sup>11</sup> *Radaev, Shkaratan*. 1995. P. 67.

In his historical works, Guizot consistently advanced the idea of the unavoidable triumph of the middle class resulting from the evolution of civilization. It was obvious for him that civil progress was directly related to a better arrangement of social relations<sup>12</sup>. The philosopher explained historical upheavals in France (“the first great lesson that our history taught us”) by immature social structure where “attempts to establish free rule were always destroyed by blind competition of the upper classes” who “failed to act together to be free and strong and thus sacrificed themselves and France to revolutions.”<sup>13</sup>

Guizot was a member of a broad intellectual network throughout his academic and political careers. This an accumulated impact on the evolution of Guizot’s concept in its theoretical and practical aspects. The members of this circle combined theoretical activity (elaborating new methods for apprehension of historical reality) with social practice, such as designing and forecasting the prospects for political action. In other words, they attempted to develop a demanded and applicable theory, thus bridging the traditional gap between theory and practice. It was in this period of time that major political debates - building relations between bourgeoisie and aristocracy (Cabinets of Decazes and the duc de Richelieu), between liberals and conservatives (ministries of Dessoles and Villèle), the suppression of the Spanish revolution (the Villèle ministry), the degree of development of the local self- development (cabinets of Martignac and Prince de Polignac), the fate of the 1814 Charter (Thiers, Guizot versus Charles X) - focused on the problem of building a sustainable society, put on the agenda by upheavals in France and Europe<sup>14</sup>.

The key element of Guizot’s intellectual network was the Doctrinaires’ Association (P.-P. Royer-Collard, R. Barante, J. Beugnot, V. de Broglie, Ch. Remusat, V. Cousin, A.-B. Villemain, C. Jordan, E. de Serre, T. Duchâtel), which was founded in 1814. According to one version, its name originates from a joking allegation thrown at its first leader, Pierre-Paul Royer-Collard, as he spoke on “doctrines,” “principles” and “theories.”<sup>15</sup> According to another version, the “doctrinaires” named themselves. This fact is confirmed by Guizot in his memoirs, believing that “doctrines in the name of which the old society was destroyed” should give way to what would help create a New France<sup>16</sup>. The Doctrinaires were not a political party in the proper sense of this word. Rather, it was a small but influential group whose members, as a contemporary remarked, “could be seated on a single sofa”<sup>17</sup> (their number did not exceed ten individuals). They were ideological successors of moderate monarchists from the Feuilleants party (1789-1791). Being

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<sup>12</sup> See: *Guizot F.*, 1828. P. 7.

<sup>13</sup> *Guizot F.* Histoire de la civilisation en France depuis la chute de l’Empire romain. Vol. 1. P., 1829. P. 15-22.

<sup>14</sup> See *Sabourin*. P. 239-245 for a more detailed analysis of the influence of social and political transformations on the liberalism doctrine.

<sup>15</sup> *Craitu*. 2005. P. 26.

<sup>16</sup> *Guizot*. 1858. P. 158.

<sup>17</sup> See: *Butenko*. P. 325.

convinced that the constitutional monarchy would relate the 1789 ideals to the monarchic power, and thus create the legal basis necessary for state and society<sup>18</sup>, they tried to reconcile freedom and order, the constitutional rule with a strong government. Among other things that they offered was an orientation to “the majority of the population,” with the bourgeoisie representing their interests<sup>19</sup>, which “on behalf of all and for the benefit of everyone won rights prevailing in the [existing] social system” and “never demanded any exceptional status for itself”<sup>20</sup>.

The Doctrinaires, with Guizot as their intellectual leader, believed that the “middle class” sustained the state and acted as “the best protection of the 1789 principles, of social order, civil and political freedoms, progress and stability” and prevented “repetition of revolutionary crises”<sup>21</sup>. A. Craitu argues that the Doctrinaires were pursuing an ambitious goal of bringing up the middle class and turning it into a real political force, which would later form the backbone of representative rule and “complete” the French Revolution.<sup>22</sup> Royer-Collard wrote in 1822: “Manufacture and property led to growth of the middle class that became involved in social activities; it doesn’t feel guilty either of curiosity or of the audacity of mind to do that; it knows that it’s its business”<sup>23</sup>. But it was only Guizot who in his memoirs summarized and conceptualized his party-fellows’ reflections and his own thoughts on this issue.

The social reality of France in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the industrial revolution, and changes in agricultural laws due to the French Revolution turned the country into a land of small proprietors with vague borders between the upper class bourgeoisie, on the one hand, and the petty and lower classes, on the other (we will take into account, of course, the ambiguous interpretation of “bourgeoisie” in France in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century). At that time, the bourgeoisie were traditionally termed as being the representatives of the third estate, unlike the late Marxist concept that defined the bourgeoisie as “the ruling class in a capitalist society that owns the means of production and survives by exploiting hired labor.”<sup>24</sup> It was in that period of time that the middle class began to radically grow. The shaky socio-political structure that went through the greatest breakdowns, such as the Revolution and Napoleonic wars, and deep transformations (the downfall of the monarchy, proclamation of the French republic and later Empire, the adoption of seven constitutions<sup>25</sup>) put on the agenda the problem of political stabilization and

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<sup>18</sup> Guizot. 1858. P. 27.

<sup>19</sup> Rosanvallon. 1985. P. 217.

<sup>20</sup> Guizot. 1864. P. 348.

<sup>21</sup> Guizot. 1867. P. 21-23.

<sup>22</sup> Craitu. 2005. P. 4.

<sup>23</sup> Quoted: Ibid. Vol. 6. P. 347.

<sup>24</sup> See: Marx, Engels. Vol. 4. 1955. P. 419-459

<sup>25</sup> The first constitution was adopted during the Revolution of the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September 1791. The Jacobins adopted the Constitution of the Year I (it didn’t come into force); the Directorate regime was proclaimed by the Constitution of the Year III. After Napoleon came to power the Constitution of the Year VIII was adopted. The Constitution of the Year X introduced the Consulate for Life. The First Empire was established by the Constitution of the Year XII. The 1814 Charter was adopted after the Restoration.



social reconciliation. But ultra-royalists, resting on the traditionalist philosophy, demanded the restoration of both the old dynasty and the old order with all its hierarchies and class divisions. Politicians, such as Polignac, stated as early as 1814 that “The Providence itself restored the Bourbons to the throne” and their comrades would “recreate all that had been destroyed.”<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, the republican Carbonaros set some democratic goals, not quite definite, though. They were mainly committed to liberating France from the externally imposed government and giving its people an opportunity to create the form of rule it desires. They did not oppose the Bourbons in the belief that the Constitutional Charter (1814) was a safeguard against the return of the old dynasty along with the old regime and secured the achievements of the first years of the Revolution. The Doctrinaires saw the Charter as a formulation of French society’s demands to the old dynasty and whose meeting by Louis XVIII was the necessary condition of his restoration to the ancestral throne. Apart from the legal basis granted by the Charter, the Doctrinaires were looking for the real social foundations of the Restoration political system. Pondering on this problem, the Doctrinaires began to view the broad stratum of small proprietors as a potential pillar of the regime interested in social stability.

The mainstreaming of the “middle class” concept during the Restoration Era preceded the real rise of the middle class as an element of the social structure. This assumption is corroborated by Guizot’s notes on the composition of the stratum. Guizot alternately viewed bourgeoisie as occupying “an intermediary position between the old aristocracy and the poorest population”<sup>27</sup>, and put the “middle classes” in the plural<sup>28</sup>, thus revealing the heterogeneity of the bourgeoisie that comprised numerous groups of varying income levels<sup>29</sup> (ranging from rentiers, trade and industrial bourgeoisie to clerks, university professors and civil servants). Guizot tried to level out this vagueness by admitting high vertical mobility in French society, where the “middle class” is open and is constantly growing due to the inflow of other social groups as they develop financially and intellectually: “The doors of the spacious room occupied by bourgeoisie in society are always wide open” while its ranks “have enough space for those who want and can enter there.”<sup>30</sup> Thus, the French bourgeoisie, like the English aristocracy, kept “rejuvenating itself by attracting people from other classes as they appear around it”. That is, coming from the people “it draws [strength] and endlessly feeds itself from the same source that is interminably flowing by and going up”, “it is the essence and its implemented right”<sup>31</sup>. But those pretending to

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<sup>26</sup> Quoted. : Talleyrand. 1841. P. 22.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. Vol. 8. P. 22.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. P. 23.

<sup>29</sup> Guizot's terminological confusion was later reflected in the French language where the “middle class” is defined as “bourgeois”, “bourgeoisie”, la “classe moyenne” (compare with the “middle class in English), les “couches moyennes”.

<sup>30</sup> *Guizot*. Vol. 6. 1858. P. 348-349.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

qualify for this category were not to “not work physically”<sup>32</sup>, having the level of income which allowed them to think and act independently and meet the property qualification to vote in elections. As Guizot urged: “Enrich yourselves through labor and economy and you’ll be voters!” This thesis can be regarded as one of the cornerstones of classical liberalism whose ideology denies direct democracy. Montesquieu believed that the masses, by reason of their ignorance, cannot appreciate free elections<sup>33</sup>. The whole nation cannot and should not make laws, but “take part in governing only to elect their representatives, which it can do fairly well.”<sup>34</sup> “The important benefit of having representatives is that they can talk business. People are totally unfit for this task, and this is one of the greatest drawbacks of democracy.”<sup>35</sup> The property qualification was meant to filter out those who “are in such a low state that are considered as not having their own decision-making power.”<sup>36</sup>

In the philosopher’s opinion, of all the population strata, the “middle class” is supposed to have decisive influence on the political system as it has “political sense” and a sense of justice. One of the most important missions of the government is to create conditions so that “social institutions in a natural way increase the number of people with the corresponding intellectual level and independence which would make them worthy of taking part in political governing.”<sup>37</sup> The screening mechanism to allow such people access to the state governance was the Charter, which included in its refined version all major rights that the bourgeoisie would need for public dominance. It made impossible the restoration of the aristocratic privileges, proclaiming the equality of all citizens before the Law, regardless of their titles and ranks. Proclaiming freedoms of the speech, press, and conscience, the Charter created an opportunity for real law-making power and political parties, “for potentially active elements of a free government.”<sup>38</sup> For the Doctrinaires, the constitution became a sacred document as it was able to reinforce the political system and set borders of the legitimate political space, with its center represented by the “middle strata.”

But participating in politics and overcoming certain barriers were not the only conditions of belonging to the “middle class.” If politically active citizens refused to act within the existing system, if they allowed for “revolutionary distortions” and used “conspiracy principles” that “cast a shadow (...) on the struggle for the Constitution principles,” they could no longer be regarded as belonging to this social group<sup>39</sup>. Patriotism and loyalty to the Government were the

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid. P. 347.

<sup>33</sup> See: *Montesquieu Ch. 1777*. P. 311-334.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> *Guizot*. Vol. 6. P. 346.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. Vol. 8. P. 9.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

necessary attributes of the “middle class” as Guizot emphasized it in his work, “Democracy in France” - “...in the times of war and the hours of peace, the middle classes always supplies people ready to sacrifice themselves for the sake of their Motherland”<sup>40</sup>.

As a politician, Guizot viewed the “middle class” as an active stratum capable of taking a share of the “burden of social guarantees” off the government towards the most vulnerable groups and eliminate the necessity of the “continuous and perilous redistribution of wealth.”<sup>41</sup> It is the “middle class” that would bear “evident and sacred” responsibility for the whole nation and through the Government come to the rescue of the least protected groups to “diminish their poverty and promote their growing aspiration for the benefits of civilization”, thus correcting “the deficiencies of the social organization, from which outflow all troubles of so many people.”<sup>42</sup>

Guizot admitted the risks arising from the special status sought by the middle class. “Like any community of people who occupy similar positions, the middle class is not devoid of its drawbacks and errors, such as short-sightedness, stubbornness, vanity and egotism; it’s very easy to talk about it but we shouldn’t slander this stratum, bearing in mind its significance...”<sup>43</sup> It was crucially important for the thinker “not to incite competition and enmity between bourgeoisie and the people like the ones that exist between bourgeoisie and aristocracy.” He was convinced that there was no ground for such confrontation as “the modern bourgeoisie doesn’t deny its own history”; on behalf of and for the sake of the common good it won the rights that it has and that are available to everyone.” These rights were the foundation of the existing social structure<sup>44</sup>. At the same time, “the middle class” (bourgeoisie) does not demand or try to get any special privileges or exceptional position though it has all necessary resources to do so”<sup>45</sup>. Guizot admits that it was impossible to fully overcome “the boiling of social passions and the diversity of social positions” as it was “a natural result of society development and freedom” but from now on these processes could not be accounted for by the confrontation of the “middle class” (bourgeoisie) and the people as there were no strict borders between them, with the Charter providing for equal conditions for everyone<sup>46</sup>.

Thus, the “middle class” was a broad socially responsible stratum that appeared as the result of social progress. Located between aristocracy and the poorest population stratum (with bourgeoisie as its kernel) it was open for all proprietors who could potentially take a passive or active part in legitimate political activities. Its main goal and the guarantee of welfare was

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<sup>40</sup> *Guizot*. 1849. P. 95.

<sup>41</sup> *Guizot*. Vol. 6. 1858. P. 347.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*. P. 348.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*. P. 349.

supporting a stable state system. While the Anglo-Saxon “middle class” was small and acted as a driver or impetus of development (“bourgeoisie” in its traditional meaning), the French “les classes moyennes” (the same as “bourgeois”, “bourgeoisie”, “les couches moyennes”) comprising the bourgeoisie and a broad stratum of proprietors, clerks, officials and teachers was the cornerstone of a political system and the state. In its definition prevails a political aspect, with the economic element remaining in the background. This fact may stem from two circumstances. Firstly, the French “middle class” theoreticians were people actively involved in politics. Secondly, the political processes in France in the late 18<sup>th</sup>- early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries clearly prevailed over the economic ones in the social conscious.

Guizot’s concept was not the only one and invariable throughout his lifetime. To some extent, its integrity was enhanced by his memoirs, where he, as a genuine scientist and thinker, tried to avoid controversies by covering theoretical issues. The property-based stratification concept, which he first offered on the pages of his historical essays, he later projected onto the social reality of post-Napoleonic France. The author saw a social structure that had developed under upheavals at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. But the post-revolutionary society had been emancipated from a strict segmentation, with its social strata having become permeable. The new form of social stratification could not but inspire Guizot’s practical interest when he and other Doctrinaires started to reflect on the foundations of the Restoration political system. With the Doctrinaires in power after the July Revolution (1830), Guizot got an opportunity to manage political processes in line with his social theory. But the 1848 Revolution led to the collapse of the liberal monarchy ideology. It demonstrated that the transparency of social groups and the property qualification-based parliamentarism serving the interests of the “middle strata” did not guarantee social stability in the long term.

Still, Guizot’s ideas influenced Marx’s class theory, who wrote that Guizot and the Restoration thinkers constantly pointed to the class confrontation “as the key to understanding French history, since the Middle Ages.”<sup>47</sup> There is almost no doubt, however, that Marx was unfamiliar with Guizot’s memoirs, otherwise his remark that “Guizot only described certain forms of the class struggle”<sup>48</sup> but didn’t contribute to the theoretical development of this problem would have not made sense. Contrary to Guizot’s fashion of reasoning, Marx counterpoised the “middle strata” of bourgeoisie, noting in passing that small manufacturers, petty vendors, and peasants were all struggling against the bourgeoisie to save their lives from death<sup>49</sup>. For Marx, the “middle classes” represented different groups. This gap was partially owed to changes in the social structure that took place in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. But, like the

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<sup>47</sup> See: *Marx, Engels*. Vol. 21. 1961. P. 308.

<sup>48</sup> *Marx, Engels*. Vol. 4. 1955. P. 481.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*: Vol. 4. P. 434.

French thinker, he used the terms, “la classe moyenne” and the “middle class”<sup>50</sup>. Like Guizot, Marx viewed the “middle classes” as conservative, not revolutionary “Moreover, they are reactionary, they try to turn History back.”<sup>51</sup>

Analysis of contemporary studies of class problems demonstrates that Guizot’s ideas on the development, composition, and role of the middle class are either unknown or have weakly influenced the scientific community. For instance, Canadian political philosopher, Crawford B. Macpherson, reviewing liberal democracy from the sociology of class viewpoint, remarked that the liberal tradition of the 19<sup>th</sup> century accepted a class society into which a democratic structure was to be built<sup>52</sup>. However, in saying so, the author doesn’t refer to the Doctrinaires, though it was them, Guizot in particular, who proclaimed this view as their goal. According to Macpherson, in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, “class” was understood in terms of property; it was composed of those who had the same relationship with property/non-property of product producing land and capital.<sup>53</sup> This conclusion clearly betrays the strong influence of Marx’s class theory and ignorance of Guizot’s thoughts on these issues. Social scientists, including the French ones, also name Marx as a classical authority on this issue and give him priority<sup>54</sup>. Guizot is referred to mostly by historians who often miss the theoretical aspect of his work. J. Ruhlmann writes about the July monarchy government’s efforts to create a social backbone in the form of the middle class, naming Guizot as the main ideologist of this policy<sup>55</sup>. Craitu writes that Guizot’s had a “serious goal” (during the period of time when he led the Doctrinaires) of educating the middle class, transforming it into a real political force and establishing the tradition of forming representative government<sup>56</sup>.

By and large, the professional community has ignored Guizot’s middle class concept. Firstly, this is due to the fact that Guizot laid it out not in a research work, but in his memoirs that were published only once. Secondly, this is owed to the general, though disputable, opinion on Guizot, voiced by Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve, “Not every great historian is a great politician.” And, finally, the importance of the Guizot era still remains largely unexplored.

Guizot’s middle class concept more likely resonates with modern French periodicals. This is owed to their traditional interest in “leftist” issues (class history issues, for obvious reasons, are in the “leftist” domain). In March 2012, the influential political daily, *Liberation*, carried an article entitled “Protection of the established order as a foundation of the rightist concept.” The author of the article notes that it was Guizot who proposed to protect the existing

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<sup>50</sup> See: *Marx, Engels*. Vol. 21. 1961. P. 308.

<sup>51</sup> *Marx, Engels*. Vol. 4. 1955. P. 434.

<sup>52</sup> See: *Macpherson*. 2011. P. 21.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*. 2011. P. 22.

<sup>54</sup> See, for instance: *Kaufman*. 2005. P. 245-270; *Chauvel*. 2006.

<sup>55</sup> *Ruhlmann*. 2001.

<sup>56</sup> *Craitu*. 2005. P. 4.

order relying on the wealthy middle class as its pillar.<sup>57</sup> A similar, though critical, opinion on that issue is found in the leftist liberal daily *Le Monde* (July 2010)<sup>58</sup>.

François Guizot was the first social thinker who enriched the middle class concept with his analysis of its role in the real political space. He addressed this issue as a practical theorist – the capacity that no one, from Aristotle to most critics of Marxism, ever possessed. This is the reason why Guizot’s middle class concept contains a number of self-contradictions regarding the social structure of the middle class and the real aspirations of its representatives, with the philosophic meaning of the concept being ambiguous. Normally, we speak of dualism in understanding or of various shades of meaning when comparing approaches by various political philosophers. But applicable to our issue, this dualism can be found in Guizot’s essays, as well. Arthur Lovejoy argued that it is due to such ambiguities that a common term begins to live on its own, turning into a real historical force<sup>59</sup>. Guizot’s concept is an idealistic vision of the social structure whose real elements were far away from the proposed model. This fact is probably owed to the political experience of the author, who tried to smooth down social contradictions. Guizot confused the interests of the ruling class with those of the broad social stratum, which might have proved (or seemed) to be the guarantee of a sustainable state system. Though absent in reality, the middle class was in its ideal expression a real social factor.

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<sup>57</sup> Terray. 2012.

<sup>58</sup> Solé. 2012.

<sup>59</sup> See: Lovejoy. 2001. Pp. 10-27.

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