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WHERE DO YOU FIT IN?

'Classless' Society? SJS Prof Claims 'No'

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By LEIGH WEIMERS
Mercury Staff Writer

Don't look now, but you're being watched.

In fact, you've been watched for the past three years.

Useless to worry about the FBI or the CIA being in your trail! You—and the people in Santa Clara, San Mateo and San Francisco counties—are being watched and studied by a San Jose State College sociologist.

And what Dr. Harold M. Hodges knows about you and your neighbors in the Peninsula area is interesting indeed.

For instance, he's found: That despite the old saw about "class society" being un-American, Peninsula people tend to fall into five general classes, ranging from the upper (social registerites) to the lower-lower (unskilled, marginal or unemployed laborers).

That income differences are no longer valid in determining these classes. The skilled and semi-skilled laborers often make more than the lower-ranking white collar worker, but their lives are worlds apart.

That reports from the East Coast to the contrary, the Peninsula believes the "myth of the conforming, kaffee-klatzching suburban robot—amiabile blanks who differ not one whit from their neighbors."

You may not know it, Mr. Suburbanite, but you probably fit into a niche in that most "un-American" word, a "class." Your place, depending on your education (to a degree), your tastes, even how much you watch television, lies in one of five general categories, according to a San Jose State College sociologist. Mercury reporter Leigh Weimers interviewed Dr. Harold M. Hodges and came up with six articles about you.

Except in isolated pockets, "neighboring" is rare in these parts. Your closest friends seldom live next door. Some neighbors share gossip, martinis and barbecue pits but not to the extent painted for us by the "experts."

That people in the upper-middle class are now watch-

ing far fewer television programs than during the past several years. They're switching to reading and hi-fi listening instead. And that TV viewing has increased at the bottom rungs.

That attainment of upper-middle class status rapidly is requiring a post-graduate college degree (professional or business administration). A mere

bachelor's degree will no longer do.

These are just a few of the things Dr. Hodges has found out about you and your neighbors in his studies.

"In the three-year course of our survey, we've conducted six waves of interviews with as many questionnaires," he reports. We've used clinical psychological tests, Rorschach (ink blot) tests and open-ended questions. We've interviewed almost 1,000 people—more than Gallup and Roper use in their national polls.

"The accuracy of our findings is attested to by the fact that we predicted the local 1960 presidential vote almost on the nose," he adds, "within one-half of one per cent. We're still at it, and many Mercury readers are likely to be interviewed this summer or fall."

Dr. Hodges is a big, youthful-looking ex-newspaperman who became interested in studying people while working for Associated Press and the Los Angeles Times in Europe. There he interviewed such persons as Winston Churchill, Pablo Picasso, P. S. Enot, Charles

de Gaulle and other notables, whetting his interest in "finding out what makes people tick."

He's found that, generally, Peninsula's "tick" in to these classes:

Upper — one-tenth of one per cent of the population, 17 years of education, with typical occupations including brokerage, banking, real estate, advertising and architecture.

Upper-middle — 10 to 15 per cent, 17 to 18 years of school, typically made up of engineers, teachers, businessmen, doctors, dentists and ministers.

Lower-middle — 35 to 40 per cent, 12 to 14 years of school, small businessmen, clerks, salesmen, supervisory-fore-

Upper-lower — 35 to 40 per cent, 8 to 12 years, skilled and semi-skilled workers.

Lower-lower — 15 to 20 per cent, 5 to 7 years, unskilled marginal of unemployed workers.

"Class boundaries are not hard and fast," Dr. Hodges stresses. "Classes, rather, merge and blend at their edges. The differences which we find are differences of degree."

What are these differences? Let's take a look.

(Tomorrow: The top of the ladder — the upper class.)