

The key factors for social stratification sociology essay



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As a key factor, the social stratification lies at the core of sociology, which affects our life everyday. Conceptually, the social stratification is defined as: 'A system by which a society ranks categories of people in a hierarchy.' (Macionis & Plummer, 2008, p. 232.)

In daily community life, individuals are stratified into various hierarchies of class, age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality and etc. Some of those are divided by the nature law and others by the social law. The next few paragraph will focus on the dimension of social law and explain how the related rule of stratification, the class, works in community life. The essay will argue that class permeates in community life.

“The class stratification is a form of social stratification in which a society tends to divide into separate classes whose members have differential access to resources and power.” (Breen, Richard, and David Rottman, 1995.) There is always a gap of economy and culture between different classes. Individuals are always born into their class, and then there would be flows between different level of classes through the social mobility.

The wealth would usually be the source power for the class stratification. When people who are on the same economic and cultural level appear the difference between much more wealthier or less wealthier, it begins. Following the change of time, a large number of wealth is congregated into the hand of a small number of people. When the difference between people becomes rich and poor, so that people spread out more from one another economically, the social class is set up. At that time, due to people are no longer belonging to the same economic level, the cultural gap appears. On

the other hand, it is not possible for people of different class to roll back to the same start line. The lower class loses more of its influence and wealth as the upper class gains more influence and wealth, further dividing the classes from one another.

As the product of the class stratification, the social class is usually defined as economic or cultural arrangements of group in society. In the modern Western context, the social class is always stratified into three layers: upper class, middle class, and lower class. Each class may be further subdivided into smaller classes.

Stratified according to these rules, there are three levels in Australia's social class: upper class, middle class and the working class. Mainly by the upper class who is in control, and the owners of capital. The middle class includes those people who take non-manual. Some in this class of professional doctors, accountants, engineers and so on. Mainly by working class occupations, in essence, is the manual.

When it comes to symbols, which show the class are not all adjacent to the two classes can give a clear dividing line. The upper class can wear expensive clothes, driving expensive cars and living in senior housing market.

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It's not a money talk society. “ Take clothes for example, other than money, there are other factors that influence the clothes that a person may choose
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to put on. For example some well-off teenagers may have clothes in line with the fashion more than those that would be said to be of their class.”(social Australia) In this rule, someone can dress in a style which rather than his class. In the same way, in middle class they may wear expensive clothes and buy fancy cars from a loan. The upper class symbols are such things as the entertainment preference, engagement in certain types of sporting activities, like golf, racing boats, GPmoto, and so on.

The social mobility, it has own definitions, features and some different types of mobility in essence , and its a great thing to discuss the justice problem of those major types of social mobility, all of these things refers to the degree to which an individual's or group's status is able to change in terms of position in the social hierarchy. “ On some facts, material wealth and the ability of an agent to move up the class system. Such a change may be described as “ vertical mobility,” in contrast to a more general change in position” (Bertaux, Daniel & Thomson Paul , 1997)

So we can get that mobility is enabled to a varying and debatable extent by economic capital, cultural capital (such as higher education or an authoritative accent), human capital , social capital , physical capital , and symbolic capital . compared with history, In modern nation states, policy issues such as welfare, medicine, education and public transport . In other societies religious affiliation, caste membership, or simple geography may be of central importance. The extent to which a nation is open and meritocratic is fundamental: a society in which traditional or religious caste systems dominate is unlikely to present the opportunity for social mobility.

There are some unique but common phenomenon in societies, which is slavery and its an example of low social mobility because, For the enslaved people, in fact, there is no upward mobility, and their owner, is actually illegal downward.

Social mobility is discuss upward, but it is a double sided phenomena, it has upward mobility, and may have relative downward mobility. If merit and fortune play a larger role in life chances than the luck of birth, someone may manage their social position, and someone may also move downward relative to others. This is the risk of be in power, to encourage people in power to increasingly devise and commission political, law, education, and allow them strengthen their economic mechanism. But, through control this trend, it s possible in a growing economy for there to be greater upward mobility than downward , as has been the case in Western Europe.

Official or legally recognized class designations do not exist in modern western democracies and it is considered possible for individuals to move from poverty to wealth or political prominence within one generation.

Despite this formal opportunity for social mobility, recent research suggests that Britain and particularly the United States have less social mobility than the Nordic countries and Canada. These authors state that “ the idea of the US as ‘ the land of opportunity’ persists; and clearly seems misplaced.”(Jo Blanden; Paul Gregg and Stephen Machin (April 2005). “ Intergenerational Mobility in Europe and North America” (PDF). The Sutton Trust.)(Matthew Taylor (25 April 2005). “ UK low in social mobility league, says charity”.

London: The Guardian.)(Obstacles to social mobility weaken equal

opportunities and economic growth, says OECD study, Organization for
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Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Economics Department, 10/02/2010.)

Not only in countries of different types of social mobility, it can also change over time. Comparison of the United States the United Kingdom, existing between the two countries in different historical periods have different degree of social mobility. In the long run, from the mid-19th century, the United States with low inequality and social mobility is very high. In the 19th century, the United States has far higher than the social mobility in Britain, as in ordinary schools movement and open public school system, the greater the agricultural sector, and high geographic mobility of the U. S.. However, in the 20th and 21st century, half of the social dynamics between the two countries the differences have narrowed, because there are two countries, growing social inequality, especially in the United States. In other words, the individual's family background, social status is more than today's forecast is 1850.

In this long river, it takes several centuries in social mobility and across types of countries, it can also continue for a long time. Comparing the United States to the United Kingdom, “ This progress persist over two countries during different historical periods. In the United States in the mid-19th century inequality was low and social mobility was high. In the late 19th century, the U. S. had much higher social mobility than in the UK, due to the common school movement and open public school system, a larger farming sector, as well as higher geographic mobility in the United States”(new world encyclopedia)

The most typical examples in American upward mobility include Abraham Lincoln and Bill Clinton, who were born into working-class families yet achieved high political office in adult life, and Andrew Carnegie, was a poor immigrant when he first arrived in America, then became a steel magnate. Examples from other countries include Ramsay MacDonald was a farm worker and baby sitter became the UK's first prime minister. Joseph Cook, was a miner when he was nine and became Australian prime minister.

To sum up, the inequity, especially in wealth area, give the birth to the social class. Under the social stratification, the social mobility makes the community life changeable. Leading upward or downward social mobility effectively is the key for the stability of the community life.