

# Cultural representations of social class essay example

[Sociology](#), [Identity](#)



Social stratification in our societies is a fact that has been in existence since the beginning of time. People have grown up with the knowledge that they belong or fit in a particular group as is defined by numerous factors during their upbringing. Our lives and our endeavors have been significantly shaped or continue to be shaped by the realities that social strata and social class dictate. Who we are, what one grows up to do, in what neighborhood one lives, what partner one chooses are possibly all product of our social interactions and the differences in culture that our interactions propagate. Different scholars have defined class strata to exist using various methods one of them socioeconomic status. This claims the existence of class to be caused by education, income and occupation. In the US, therefore, sociologists have stated roughly that the society is classified in Upper, Middle, Lower and Working classes. The difference in these classes is marked by several factors such as the lifestyles led, property owned, power possessed and the ability to influence. People worldwide are always in the business of trying to get to higher social classes in most cases. In some societies like India the caste system is so entrenched in Individuals that some believe that they are meant to be in the caste that they were born in. This constant seeking of gratification and change is caused by people rating given social classes as more appropriate and, therefore, more prestigious. Culture worldwide has seen people socialized to behave a particular manner. For example, children raised in affluent homes are taught the value of being creative and being able to speak out and argue one's case. These children are raised with the reality that they belong to a higher societal ranking. Other children not in the same situations will grow up wanting to be able to

have possessions that they have not grown up with and the same applies to working adults. People who are in the middle, lower or working class will always seek the prestige that comes with being in the upper class like driving, having better health care for their families, being able to go out on vacation with family, having good education for their children and generally being able to afford what one wants but may not necessarily need. This definitely contributes and impacts identity and pride within given social classes. Those in higher social classes based on their wealth, their power, their possessions, their income or occupation, for instance, engineers, doctors or politicians will be more proud to associate with their given class. They will take pride in being members of clubs and being able to enroll their kids in given schools and talking with their papers over dinner at exclusive hotels. Their identity in this case will be marked by their financial standing, the prestige that comes with it, the lifestyle they can lead, their networks and contacts and the amount of influence that their social standing gives them. Likewise, for those who have to struggle a little bit more to meet daily bills and expenses, they definitely develop a different mindset in terms of who they identify with. They may not afford the same luxurious cars or jewelry as the upper class but may still buy them in order to feel like they belong to the upper class. This already is a significant indication of a lack of pride in whatever life situations they are in at present and proof that for them their identity may be dictated by who they hope to become and not who they are at present.

Culture significantly affects who we are, what jobs we get to do, who we associate with etc. According to the Oxford dictionary, culture is a set of

beliefs, values, traits that are transmitted by social means through people. It could be through family settings, through our peers in school, our religion, or ethnicity. These beliefs and values that people develop overtime get so entrenched that they restrain one from doing what they have not been taught is right. Those who have been socialized in affluent societies surround themselves always with people they regard to be in their own social circles and will work at all costs not to get poorer or fall below their 'standing'. They will take advanced learning courses, to occupy high end professions to be able to maintain their lifestyles. Conversely, those in a lower social standing having been brought up maybe to obey, to value honesty, will feel inadequate in the presence of people regarded to be in an upper class and maybe be unable to speak up and contribute their say in normal matters. They may, therefore, opt to stay in their social class with peers in whose company they may feel safer. The Indian Dalits for a long time have believed that they were born manual laborers and that it was where they belonged; classified as the lowest caste to wash dishes, mend clothes and shoes, clean waste and generally serve the affluent.

Many people stay in the social class into which they were born because of the socialization they get while growing up. The beliefs and values they learn become so entrenched and make a framework of their minds by which everything is judged including their abilities as a boy or girl, their inadequacies as a given race or ethnicity and their strength and power as having come from a lineage of wealthy powerful people.

In conclusion, this essay reiterates research done that social stratification is a phenomenon that continues to alter and shape the world. The reasons

behind it are many and diverse; some are set by our environment, some by ourselves. Its existence also is proof of global inequality in terms of resources and that the human population in a bid to reach ultimate satisfaction may just continue to drive the world to an even more stratified society.

## References

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