

Social stratification essay

[Sociology](#), [Women](#)



By definition, social stratification is the system by which the society ranks different classes of people in a hierarchy based on their wealth, power and prestige or status. Social stratification fundamentally dictates the distribution of resources and opportunities in the society. Unfortunately, stratification inspires inequality because every individual in society is judged and condemned according to their social class, language and ethnicity, gender and age, and place. There is unequal distribution of primary valued resources, influence, interpersonal regard and personal freedom between members of a particular society reflecting their position in the societal hierarchy. According to Grusky, Ku, Szelényi, 2008(p. 34), opportunities that individuals get to engage in certain activities, and the chances that they have to accomplish certain goals, depends on where they are located in the social hierarchy. People are distinctly divided into groupings and their lives revolve around these classifications.

There are certain things that some people can or cannot do, simply because their situation in life prevents them from being able perform certain tasks. All societies stratify in regard to sexuality. Tasks and activities are assigned differently in various cultures and they change over time, ruled by stereotypes which are basically deeply rooted ideologies about the characteristics and conduct of men and women. In the current job market there are some occupations that are seen not to be cut for women such as engineering or other physical demanding jobs. Women are deemed as the weaker sex and therefore perceived as not being competent enough to undertake some jobs that were initially believed to be for men. Women are perceived as subordinate to men and their roles and value in society differ

greatly. Unfortunately for most cultures the role of women is seen as child-bearing and nurturing a home. Ironically there exists a bank policy that advises against lending to single women and African Americans terming it a poor lending risk as compared to men. Women and minority groups have been segregated and ultimately denied valuable opportunity and equality for the smooth running of operations in a society. To add to that, science subjects in schools are stereotypically believed to be 'too difficult' for the girl-child.

In regard to racial stratification, certain races are deemed superior to others all over the world. In the United States for instance, the white majority influence overrides all other racial groups in a country believed to be civilized, free and fair. The black minority seems to be at the centre of prejudice, and suffer from substandard healthcare and low paying jobs. Most of black children have to be content with community schooling and those who get better education struggle through it. Furthermore, according to Grusky, 1994 (p. 13) in the event of a crime, there is a higher likelihood of black people being arrested in the vicinity as compared to any other racial group. Additionally, there is a 50% higher chance of death penalty in a court case that involves a white victim and a black defendant. This only serves to show how the society today has been prejudiced.

Ethnicity on the other hand is primarily associated with particular languages, historical events, places, and family background. Certain groups of people are stratified based on their descent and association with a particular territory, economic activities and lifestyle. One perfect example is the Red

Indians of the USA. Ironically, this group of people have been in the US for centuries as the original home. However, their social status is subdued and they have limited access to valuable resources such as employment, healthcare, education and even political say in the current administration. The Red Indians are not perceived as being civilized enough to have a say on how the government is run. . Their chances of success are very slim and so is their position in society. The society entertains a subjective belief that people from different ethnic backgrounds should face important consequences in the formation of the political community (Fink, 2002, pp. 19-25).

Finally, in Britain, sociologists argue that social stratification is basically as a result of the difference in the spending behaviour of its people. They argue that this is caused by the inequalities in the income earned which is directly linked to occupation and the living standards of the citizens. Specifically, Jackson (2010, pp. 133-138) contends basing on the researches conducted by D'Aeth that, there are seven social strata in which the Britons lie within; A, B, C, D, E, F and G. He argues that all these strata are based on “ occupation, income, housing, social customs and what might be called intellectual ability”. In strata or class “ C”, he classifies individuals: Who live in a five-bed roomed house with a guest room and who are skilled workers for example, foreman, officers and clerks; who set their tables for meals; whose children visit their guardians over the weekends and those individuals whose minds are crafty and not really very intelligent. Secondly, in group “ D” are shopkeepers, clerks, printers, tradesmen and a few printers. They actually have a higher intelligence level, social life and technical skills as

compared to those in groups A, B and C. Finally, those in groups E, F and G had better social, intelligence and intellectual levels as compared to the rest.

References

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