

# [Distribution of power within the political community](https://assignbuster.com/distribution-of-power-within-the-political-community/)

In Max Weber’s “ Distribution of Power within the Political Community”, he discusses three concepts: class, status and parties. Weber begins by arguing ‘ power’ is the fate of men that try to grasp their will, even against that of others within the same society. He discusses two types of power: economic and social. Economic being the ability to determine what is to be done with materials and commodities, regarding production, consumption, etc. Social power overlaps with economic power, but also includes legal and political power. This concept, however according to Max Weber means, “ the way in which social honor is distributed in a community between typical groups participating in this distribution.”(247). Therefore, the distribution of power within a community is based on three important aspects: class, status, and parties. This paper will summarize Weber’s main points; include a comparison of ideas with an author previously discussed in lecture, and my interpretation of what Max Weber is arguing in his 1914 excerpt.

Sociologist Max Weber first begins his article by discussing class. When identifying class there are three points Weber outlines. These points consist of 1) a specific casual ingredient of people’s fate (in terms of living conditions, materialistic possessions to see the level of power and wealth one has) among various actors, 2)is based on economic interests and wealth, and 3) is represented under the conditions of the labour market. Therefore, ‘ class situation’ ultimately signifies a situation where people are found with the same characteristics in regards to class. According to Weber, in society, there are two types of people, property owners and property-less. Quite apparent would be the fact that property owners are of course privileged, while the property-less live day-to-day trying to sell their services in the market. Wages and skill level are dependent on the service being provided. This depends on communal action (oriented on basis of shared belief or affiliation). In opposition, societal action deals with adjusting one’s interests-not to sense a shared purpose, but to recognize shared interests. In order for either action to occur, everyone has to be familiar with the differences between wealth and opportunity, but must be seen as a result of property distribution and economic power. In the excerpt it says something along the lines of “ class antagonism is a simple state of affairs that has frequently been decisive for the role of class situation has played in formation of political parties”.

The second aspect Weber argues is status. Status, according to him means communities, unlike class. Status is defined as the likelihood that your fate is determined by social honor, also known as prestige. The common link of status group is a similar life style which is established based on wealth and income. According to Weber, there are social restrictions that are reflected in prestige-marriage patterns and residence.

Rituals are a big deal within a caste. Members are prohibited from having any contact with any other group that is considered ‘ lower’ than that of their own-especially when the differences are ethnic. “ In caste structure, ethnic distinctions have become ‘ functional distinctions’ within the political association.”(253) Weber also touches upon social stratification, which according to him, “ goes hand in hand with a monopolization of ideal and material goods or opportunities” (253) Of course those stratified above others are more privileged and oppose the distribution of power that is regulated through the labour market and based on wealth. When economic stratification barely changes, changes regarding status tend to increase.

Thirdly, Max Weber discusses parties. Parties as said by him are organized power. They are a mixture of both class (economic order) and status (social order). Parties aim to influence social action and aim to enforce their goals within both a legal and political realm. A party is never just associated with a class situation or status. A party puts in a great effort in order to achieve political control, and it all depends on how a community is classified-by status or class.

Though this paper is about Max Weber, it is important to compare sociologists to one another based on their concepts and ideas. One author discussed in lecture was Karl Marx. Marx and Weber’s theories are not quite different from one another. Marx also believed that classes refer to economy but in a different sense. Marx saw class as being connected with means of production, in contrast Weber linked class to the factors previously discussed: prestige, wealth, and most importantly power. Both men had agreed that the more skills one has, the higher there wage is. Weber however, supposed that the differences in people’s wages suggested one’s material conditions, hence why there are different types of social action. Also, Marx saw the divisions of class as an important source in society in regards to social conflict unlike Weber.

In his article, “ Distribution of Power within a Political Community”, one may accept as true what Max Weber had to say. In order for a political party to be formed, one must be wealthy, therefore prestigious, and ultimately have the power to dominate. Though one may face obstacles due to the fact that there are others competing for the same position who share the same status, or class, also known as communal action. Weber does an excellent job in distinguishing the differences among class and status, though when mixed may influence the formation of a political party. Unlike other authors discussed in lecture, Max Weber, I have found to be the easiest to comprehend and definitely agree with.