The Arithmetic of Inequality

Jimmy is a second grader. He pays attention in school, and he enjoys it. School records show that he is reading slightly above grade level and has a slightly better than average IQ.

Bobby is a second grader across town. He also pays attention in class and enjoys school, and his test scores are similar to Jimmy’s.

Bobby is a safe bet to enter college (more than four times as likely as Jimmy) and a good bet to complete it -- at least twelve times as likely as Jimmy. Bobby will probably have at least four years more schooling than Jimmy. He is twenty seven times as likely as Jimmy to land a job which by his late forties will pay him an income in the top tenth of all incomes. Jimmy has about one chance in eight of earning a median income (Bassis, 1991:216).

I. Basic Definitions

A. Life Chances

Life chances refer to one's access to resources. Life chances can refer to one's ability to get food and shelter. It also refers to access to social institution such as health care, education, the government, and the law (to mention a few). Social class affects one's life chances across a broad spectrum of social phenomenon from health care, to educational attainment, to participation in the political process, to contact with the criminal justice system.

B. What is Social Stratification?

Social stratification refers to the division of a society into layers (or strata) whose occupants have unequal access to social opportunities and rewards. People in the top strata enjoy power, prosperity, and prestige that are not available to other members of society; people in the bottom strata endure penalties that other members of society escape. In a stratified society, inequality is part of the social structure and passes from one generation to the next.

C. What is a Class?

People who occupy the same layer of the socioeconomic hierarchy are known as a social class (Bassis, 1990:216). According to Henslin (2004:192), a social class is a large group of people who rank closely to one another in wealth, power, and prestige.

II. Stratification Systems

A. Caste: Ascribed Status
A caste system is a rigid system of inequality. Caste position is strictly defined. There is no social mobility from one caste to another. Caste relationships are relatively conflict free. The lack of conflict can be explained, in part, because of the powerful position on the upper caste and, in part, by an ideology that justifies caste position. There is little deviance on the part of the lower castes because of fear of harsh punishment.

A well-known society with a caste system is India. People are born into a caste. Caste membership determines your occupation, social interaction, power, and education. No amount of achievement will change your caste position.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example: India's Caste System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brahman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kshatriya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viashia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shudra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untouchable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some argue that race and gender sometimes functions like a caste system in the United States. People are born with their race and their gender.

1. **Endogamy**

In a caste society, people have to marry within their own caste.

2. **Ritual Pollution**

In caste societies many members guard against ritual pollution. Contact between members of the upper caste and the lower caste is inappropriate. Such contact is seen by the members of the upper caste as unclean. In the Indian caste system upper caste individuals avoid even the shadow of an untouchable. The shadow of an untouchable's house is polluting to members of the upper castes.

**B. Class: Achieved Status**

The class system is an open form of stratification based primarily on economic criteria. The boundaries between classes are more fluid than with the caste system. Individuals can move around within the class system. Their status can improve or decline. Class membership depends, at least in part, on
characteristics which the individual can control. Keep in mind, however, that people tend to be born into class structure. Change is difficult. Historic conditions determine social class structure. The ideology of the dominant culture perpetuates class structure. The type of class structure which allows the greatest mobility is generally a modern industrial society.

C. A Classless Society

In a classless society there are no economically based strata.

1. Soviet Union as an example

Not even the Soviet's claim to be a true Communist society. They only claim to be at the transition phase between capitalism and socialism.

III. Perspectives on Class

A. Stratification: A Functionalist View

Functionalist see the class structure is beneficial to American society. Furthermore, class structure is necessary. Functionalist concern themselves with how a society can encourage the most qualified people to do the most important jobs. Class structure facilitates this end.

1. Class structure provides a competitive arena

A class structure allows the best rise to the top of the social strata.

2. Class structure provides a motivating force

Fluid class structure provides motivation and an arena for individual achievement. It offers prizes that challenge people to work hard.

3. Class structure provides opportunity

Americans believe that through hard work, all people have a crack at getting to the top. The wealth of the few is the goal of every American. Of course, there is poverty. Poverty, however, is simply the result of individuals not trying hard enough.

B. Stratification: A Conflict View

Conflict theory argues that the basis of social stratification is found in conflict over some kind of scarce resources. Conflict theory contends that stratification is not necessary, but is maintained to safeguard the ruling class's privileges. Those who find social class beneficial are those who have "made it" in the system.

Rather than stratification being a fluid system of upward and downward mobility based on ability, the class system is actually characterized by institutional inequalities in income and wealth. Only on rare
occasions do Americans break through the class barrier. Usually break through occurs as a result of a lucky "roll of the dice." Few people actually succeed at social advancement through sheer hard work.

**Marriage and Upward Mobility**

Marriage is the quickest route out of poverty. Marriage out of poverty is no more than a lucky roll of the dice. Generally, birth determines one's position in society. Rich fathers have rich children while poor fathers have poor children. Changes in class position require a complex mixture of luck, inheritance, and effort, and probably in that order of importance (see Harrington, 1984).

Example: Lotteries

**Poverty**

Poverty in the United States "officially" refers to people who fall below the "official poverty line." In general, however, poverty is a complex subject that depends on not only official definitions, but on the perspectives of people as well as the physical location of people.

One common perspective on poverty is to compare the percentage (or rate) of people in poverty from one group or another. When one explores rates of poverty, one is often directed toward the high poverty rates of women with children (no husband present) or the high poverty rates experienced by people of color.

When one explores the actual numbers of poor people, one finds that the race of the majority of poor people is white. Whites have a lower proportion of people in poverty than other racial groups, but because there are so many more whites in U.S. society, their lower poverty rate still translates into larger numbers of poor people.

When one investigates poverty by age, one learns that children (under age 18) are most likely to be poor. On the other hand, people who are 65 years old and older are least likely to be poor. (At least this is the perspective based on the "official definition of poverty." Many of the elderly live slightly above the poverty line so they are technically not poor, but they are still in need.)

**The Official Poverty Line**

The poverty line, the official measure of poverty in the United States, is set at three times a low-cost food budget. Henslin (2006:201) argues that in the 1960s, when the poverty line was determined, poor people spent roughly a third of their income on food. In the U.S., families who earn less than three times the cost of food are considered "officially poor." This
status could influence the distribution of social welfare dollars from Washington.

The poverty rate refers to the percentage of people in the United States who fall below the poverty line.

The entire official poverty measure is inadequate. Currently, poor people spend no more than a fifth of their budget on food. If one wanted to know the "real" level of poverty in terms of 1960s standards, one should multiply the low-cost food budget by five, not three. By multiplying by three, the percentage of the population is grossly underestimated. As a result of underestimating poverty, Washington makes fewer funds available to support poor people.

C. A Synthesis of Functionalist and Conflict Perspectives on Class

1. Basic Resources

The basic resources needed for the maintenance of society are allocated in much the same way that the functionalists argue. This is efficient. He contends that all societies do this to one degree or another.

2. Surplus Wealth

Surplus wealth is allocated in much the same way that the conflict theory predicts (i.e., through exploitation and class struggle).

D. Social Mobility

Social mobility generally refers to the movement from one social class to another. There are several ways to view social mobility in terms of class position.

1. Intergenerational Mobility

Intergenerational mobility refers to movement (up or down) the social hierarchy by family members. An example here would be a family where the father is a trucker and the sibling becomes a doctor.

2. Exchange Mobility

Exchange mobility is where individuals change places with one another in the stratification system.

For example, if 100 working-class people move upward on the class ladder and, at the same time, 100 middle-class people experience downward mobility, sociologists would consider this to be an example of exchange mobility (Henslin, 2004:209).

3. Structural Mobility

How fluid is the U.S. class-structure? Structural mobility occurs when the economic status of people changes as a result of structural changes in the economy. The argument is sometimes made that the
U.S. has a very fluid class structure. Many families have improved their class position over the past 100 years in the U.S. Does this mean that the U.S. has a fluid class structure or does something else explain the apparent successes that people have with regards to improvements in their well-being? When the structure itself changes, everyone's position changes. Structural change is an important explanation for much of the recent improvement in the financial well being of many in American society. As the U.S. became industrialized, the occupational structure itself was transformed. Children, therefore, could not stay in the same occupational position as their parents.

a. The Changing Labor Structure

In 1900 17.9 percent of all laborers positions were white collar. By 1979 50.9 percent of all jobs were in the white-collar sector. The percentage of people doing farm work on the other hand declined from 37.6 in 1900 to 2.8 percent in 1979. Children must, therefore, take jobs in sectors of the economy other than that which their parents worked in (From Charon, 1986:326).

IV. Analysis of Class: Karl Marx

Karl Marx studied the forces that caused the misery of the working class in 19th Century Western Europe. The student of Marx cannot forget that Marx is a historic figure. He wrote in the middle 1800 when social relations were some what different from those found at the end of the 20th century. At the time of Marx a handful of wealthy capitalist exploited a large and impoverished working class. For Marx, ownership of the means of production was the primary factor that distinguished the different classes under industrial capitalism. Farley (2000) contends that during the 1800s capitalism was more exploitative than during any time in the last several hundred years.

A. What is a Social Class According to Marx?

In Marxist terminology, "a class consists of all the people who share a common relationship to the means of production" (Robinson, 1989:172).

1. The bourgeoisie

Those people who control the means of production (whether that means factories or slaves or land) make up the dominant class or the bourgeoisie.

2. The Proletariat

Those who work for the dominant class (slaves, peasants, industrial laborers) are the subordinate class or the proletariat. This relationship is both unequal and exploitative in that the dominant class takes unfair advantage of the subordinate class.

B. Surplus Wealth

How does inequality occur in the first place? The workers produce surplus wealth. Workers transform raw material into finished products. The value of the finished product is greater than the cost of the worker's labor and the cost of raw material. The workers, however, do not enjoy the surplus which
they have created. The owners of the means of production (factories) are able to seize the surplus for their own benefits. Robertson (1989:172) contends that "this, in Marx's view, is the essence of exploitation, and the main source of conflict between the classes throughout history." Marx would argue that in an ideal economy, the workers would keep the surplus they have created as they transform raw material into finished products.

C. Critiques of Marx

Several features of advanced capitalist society have thrown doubt on Marx's predictions.

1. What about the middle-class?

The existence of the middle class is problematic for Marx. Not only are the middle-class a large and well-to-do class, they generally do not work for the owners of the means of production. They often work for their fellow citizen (as state bureaucrats) or they are self-employed.

2. Large Corporations

Marx also did not predict the rise of large corporations which are owned by thousands of people and which are controlled by salaried managers. Ownership and control of the means of production are no longer the same thing.

3. Men and Women of Knowledge

In post industrial society ownership may not be the most important asset in the economy. Knowledge of how the system works may be more important. Status accrues to people with knowledge.

Contradictory Class Locations

Marx roughly divided society into two classes: the workers and the owners of production. He perceived these groups as having competing interests and not having much in common with one another.

Erik Wright revised Marx's concept of social classes by suggesting that some people simultaneously occupying more than one class. He contends that such people occupy contradictory class positions. Many times people cross over. An individual can begin life as a worker and later on, become a capitalist. That former worker surely has something in common with the people he used to work with ... certainly much more so that the capitalist who never "works (see Henslin, 2004:199)."

V. Analysis of Class: Max Weber

How does one determine social class? Often social class is thought of in terms of money and/or wealth. For example, if one individual earns a million dollars per year while another individual earns $3,000 per year, the first individual generally occupies a higher social position. It's important to note, however, that
social class does not have to refer to money and/or wealth exclusively. Drug dealers may have a lot of money, but they are not members of an upper class.

**Determining Social Class:**

**Socioeconomic Status (SES)**

**What is Socioeconomic Status (SES)?**

Farley (2005:32) notes that nearly all societies tend to group themselves by socioeconomic status. SES is a concept which is rather complex. The average citizen may tend to group people according to simple criteria like income or wealth. SES is a more robust concept. Socioeconomic status (SES) calls attention the complex nature of social class. It is determined by an array of social and economic indicators. It is also subject to interpretation from various perspectives.

**1. Objective Measures**

There are objective measures of social class. Henslin (1999:253) suggests that researches can assign people to various social classes based objective criteria involving wealth, power, and prestige. Some objective indicators can include occupation, educational level, number of dependents, type of residence, infant mortality, and life expectancy rates.

**2. Subjective Measures**

There are also subjective measures. Typically, determining class from a subjective point of view involves asking someone how they perceive their class position.

**3. Reputational Measures**

Finally, class can be determined using the reputational method (Henslin, 1999:253). People identify an individual's social class based on their expert knowledge of their individual's circumstances. The reputational method is limited to smaller communities, where people are familiar with one another's reputation. People at each class level see class differently. They, therefore, carry around different personal pictures of society's classes. People see finer divisions at their own class level, but tend to lump together people who occupy other class levels. For example, People at the top see several divisions of people at the top while they see one large monolithic group of people at the bottom. On the other hand, people at the bottom see several distinctions of poor people, but only one group at the top -- the rich (Henslin, 1999:253).

Weber offers a multidimensional class model that incorporates three distinct entities: Economic status (wealth), political status (power), and social status (prestige).

**A. Wealth**
Wealth consists of income and assets (property).

Robertson (1989:180) contends that, while the US is philosophically indebted to the notion that "all men are created equal," the US is, in fact, a very stratified society. The US has the most inegalitarian class structures in the industrialized world (see Long, 1993).

For the first century of nationhood in the US, a caste system was in place in the form of racial slavery. Many of the familiar characteristics associated with the Indian caste system were in effect. Included in America's caste system were endogamy and notions of ritual pollution. Blacks were not allowed in the same restaurants, bathrooms, and buses as whites. Women also can be seen as occupying secondary position in a caste system. Despite the professed commitment to human rights, the US today contains 600,000 millionaires and 32 million people below the poverty line.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Percent of Households</th>
<th>Percent of Wealth</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Super-Rich</td>
<td>0.5 %</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
<td>2.5 Million or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very-Rich</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>1.4 to 2.5 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>29.9%</td>
<td>$206,000 to 1.4 mil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The rest of us</td>
<td>90.0%</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>Less than $200,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Eitzen, 1988:257

1. Assets

Wolff (in Skolnick and Currie, 1997:99) describes assets as consisting of all forms of "financial wealth such as bank accounts, stocks, bonds, life insurance savings, mutual fund shares and unincorporated business; consumer durables like cars and major appliances; and the value of pension rights." Wolff (1997:99) continues to say that from these sources, one should subtract liabilities such as "consumer debt, mortgage balances, and other outstanding debt." The upper classes control a much greater percentage of valuable assets than income. Robertson (1989:180) points out that in 1973 the bottom fifth of Americans controlled only 0.2% of all assets while the top fifth control 76% of all assets. Further, the assets controlled by the poor tend to depreciate (household items) over time while those of the rich tend to appreciate (real estate and stocks).

2. Income
Appelbaum & Chambliss (1997:134) defines income as "the amount of money a person or household earns in a given period of time (usually a year)." The gap between rich and poor is also very unequal and it is increasing.

<p>| The Distribution of Income in Industrial Societies: |
| Household Income Per Capita |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bottom Quintile</th>
<th>Top Quintile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK, 1979</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany, 1984</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S., 1985</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden, 1981</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source: WDR, 1991:263</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Power

Power is the ability to see that one's will is acted upon. Powerful people are able to mobilize resources to achieve their goals despite resistance from others. Henslin (1999) argues that it is an inevitable part of everyday life. Like wealth, power is concentrated in the hands of a few. Robertson (1989:182) makes an interesting observation with regards to minorities gaining more political power. He argues that just as Blacks, Hispanics, and Women are beginning to votes in their respective interests, power is flowing away from public institutions and into the hands of giant bureaucracies and influential private interest groups. Voters, after all, have only one of several possible means of influencing decision makers, i.e., their vote.

C. Prestige

Prestige refers to the power to impress or influence. It differs from power in that it is based less on political position. Prestige correlates with charisma. A prestigious person has a reputation based on brilliance, achievements, or on character.

Robertson (1989:182) contends that there is much less stratification in terms of prestige in the United States than there is in terms of wealth and power. He suggests that while prestige raking is obvious, Americans treat each other remarkable well when compared to other countries.
Prestige Ratings of Occupations in the United States: (1972-1982)

These are prestige ratings of 1 to 100 that average Americans gave to various occupations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Physician</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>College Professor</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Judge</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Physicist</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Dentist</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>Waiter</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>Farm Laborer</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>Maid/Servant</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>Garbage Collector</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>Janitor</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Shoe shiner</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VI. Maintaining Stratification

The United States has great inequality (See L.I.S. Chart). How is it possible that such an unequal system can exist? Always, the majority are denied the wealth of a few. Revolutions, however, are rare compared to all political activity. Two explanations seem to explain why revolutions are so rare. On one hand, the dominant class controls resources. On the other hand, there is wide spread belief that the rule of the upper class is legitimate.

Marx notes that social institutions tend to reflect the will of the dominant class. This does not mean that the ruling class actually plots to control institutions.

A. Social Networks

The government does not conspire to control all wealth. The rich act in their common interests by simply knowing each other and by sharing a common agenda.

B. Legitimacy

Many see the inequitable distribution of wealth at the natural outcome of hard work, perseverance, and a little luck. Even the poor see the current distribution of wealth as legitimate (See Weber, 1968). The masses view the given political economy as valid and justified.

C. Ideology

An ideology is a set of beliefs which explain or justifies some actual or potential social arrangement (See Robertson, 1989:176). An ideology is a belief structure that confers legitimacy on a social system.

Example: A system of beliefs that justifies a social arrangement like slavery is an ideology (Henslin, 2004, 168).

1. False Consciousness

Robertson's (1989:176) definition is "a subjective understanding that does not correspond with the objective facts of one's situation." Karl Marx would argue that workers experience false consciousness when they mistakenly identify with the capitalists. The worker might believe that if he only works hard enough, he might secure a better position in society. The worker might blame poverty on laziness or lack if education. They may also hold minor positions in society, but still feel like they have "made it." For example, a worker who has a small savings account and who owns a few shares of stock might tend to think of themselves as an investor rather than as a worker.

Marx argues that the poor do not realize that their miseries are a shared phenomenon that results from their oppressed status. Instead of blaming the system they blame their circumstances on fate, an act of god, luck, or other factors beyond their control.
Henslin (2004:172) suggests that workers experience false consciousness when they identify with capitalists.

2. Class Consciousness

Class consciousness refers to "an objective awareness of the lower stratum's common plights and interests as an oppressed group." At this point they begin to question the legitimacy of the system. They begin to build their own ideology which justifies and supports their class interests and consequently seems revolutionary to the dominant stratum.

VII. Data Project #2

Data Project # 2

Socioeconomics on the Texas Border with Mexico

(See project guidelines)

VIII. Portraits of the Classes

The following material is taken from Charon (1986). The percentages are rough estimates.

A. Upper Class (1 percent of total population)

The upper-class consists of relatively few individuals and families (a small executive club) with great wealth and great power in the economy. Generally the upper-class inherits their wealth. It comes in the form of property and other assets. While this group does not have to work, they often serve on the boards of directors of major corporations. From this vantage point, the upper-class occupies a position from which they can have great impact on the course of world history. The upper-class has a certain lifestyle in which individuals are careful to socialize only with the "right crowd."

B. Upper Middle-Class (10 Percent)

The Upper middle-class consists of "successful business people, executives, professionals, and high ranking civil and military officials. Ownership of business as well as prestigious occupations bring wealth to these individuals. Most have high levels of education. The wealth of this class comes from investment and savings. Unlike in the upper class, they inherit little of their wealth. This group is very active politically and culturally.

C. Middle Class (30 percent)

The lower middle-class also consists of professionals, semi professionals and small business people. People who make up the middle-class are less affluent and occupy fewer prestigious positions that the Upper Middle-class. The middle class includes nurses, teachers, police officers, and social workers. The middle-class includes most of the white collar work force and others who earn "respectable" livings. Jobs for this group are generally secure. The middle-class is well educated. They also have great political impact. It was this group after all, who got us out of Vietnam and who lead the California tax rebellion.
D. Working Class (40 percent)

The working class consists of skilled and unskilled workers (blue collar workers), factory workers, farm hands, sales personnel, and low-level clerical workers. Usually these positions do not require college. Although many in this class belong to unions, it is not, as a rule, an effective political force. Jobs performed by this group are routine, mechanized, and closely supervised. These jobs are less secure than jobs performed by people in the middle-class.

The nature of work performed by the working-class has changed. On one hand the back breaking work that used to characterize the working-class has evolved into less physically demanding work. Regardless, work performed at this level is none-the-less tedious. It is also boring. The working-class is less secure now than in the past. As corporation shift their operations offshore, jobs traditionally done by this group are now performed by Third-Worlders.

E. Lower Class (20 percent)

The lower-class consists of the poor. The lower-class experiences high rates of unemployment and dependency on government, employers, the state of the economy, and landlords. People from the lower-class are not likely to succeed in the educational system. They experience prejudice from the legal system. This class seldom exerts itself politically.

F. The Under-class (1 percent)


VIII. Consequences of Class Position

A. Dating and Marriage

Children tend to seek out those who act, speak, and have the same cultural values as themselves. The upper class also arranges social events such that upper class children meet only upper class children.

B. Socialization

Class also shapes values and norms and these norms and values in turn determine how people act in social settings like school and occupation. Middle-class children grow up valuing independence more than working-class people while working-class people prefer conformity.

C. Health

In general the higher the social class, the greater the life expectancy. The poor are subject to more infant deaths and disease than the upper classes. Rates of mental illness also go up as social class goes down and the poor are less likely to receive treatment. The higher level of stress is one explanation for higher rates of mental illness.

D. Formal Education
Class correlates with education in a number of ways. Since education is community based, class determines the quality of teachers and curriculum. Teachers have middle class backgrounds and, therefore, work better with students "like themselves." The importance of education receives greater emphasis in upper classes, therefore, children of the upper classes are more likely to attend college.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1970 Educational levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88 percent attend college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64 percent attend college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 percent attend college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 percent attend college</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Data from Charon, 333:1986)

E. Political Behavior and Attitudes

People who occupy higher class positions tend to act in their class interests by voting while people from lower levels of society do not. The following material on voting patterns addresses the 1972 Presidential election (see Charon, 333:1986).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparison of voting patterns with education levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>47 percent of those with an elementary school education or less voted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61 percent of those with a high school education voted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79 percent of the college educated voted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparison of voting turnouts with employment status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50 percent of the unemployed voted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
66 percent of the employed voted

Comparison of voting levels with occupation status

49 percent of laborers voted

61 percent of craft workers voted

76 percent of white collar workers voted

F. Crime and law enforcement

People from the lower classes do not commit crimes. However, the crimes committed by the poor receive more attention. Poor people, who commit crimes, are more likely to receive punishment. Nowhere is the power differential between classes more obvious than in the criminal justice system.

G. Perspective

The higher ones class, the greater is ones optimism about the economy and political order. The greater is the hope for personal success. People who live in poverty, even though schools and parents teach them that they should strive to rise above poverty, face schools that can't teach them. They encounter employers that won't hire them. They live near stores that can't sell to them. The poor, after all, have different class backgrounds than their teachers. They have no skills to sell employers. They have no money with which to buy things.

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