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MATRIC NUM: 17/sms13/001

**INTRODUCTION**

In order to give a succinct discussion of the consequences of social stratification it is immensely important to give a scholarly definition of social stratification.

A. Sorokin defines social stratification as means the differentiation of a given population into hierarchically superposed classes. It is manifested in the existence of upper and lower social layers. Its basis and very essence consist in an unequal distribution of rights and privileges, duties and responsibilities, social values and privations, social power and influences among the members of a society. In the past social stratification in societies was simplified to the upper class and lower class, due to globalization and industrialization we now have socioeconomic class, middle class and the working class.

For this research, the consequences of social stratification can be categorized into two; the structural functionalists and the social conflict theorists. The structural functionalist is a category that has sociologist who strongly believe social stratification aids the smooth operation of a society. In 1945, sociologists Kingsley Davis and Wilbert Moore published the Davis-Moore thesis, which argued that the greater the functional importance of a social role, the greater must be the reward. The theory posits that social stratification represents the inherently unequal value of different work. Certain tasks in society are more valuable than others. Qualified people who fill those positions must be rewarded more than others. The thesis states that social stratification is necessary to promote excellence, productivity, and efficiency, thus giving people something to strive for. Davis and Moore believed that the system serves society as a whole because it allows everyone to benefit to a certain extent.

The social conflict theorist; scholars in this class are deeply critical of social stratification. The argument here is that social stratification benefits some at the expense of others. The primary contributors to this category are Karl Marx and Max Weber. Karl Marx based his theory on the idea that society has two classes; the the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The bourgeoisie are the owners of the means of production, such as factories and other businesses, while the proletariat are the workers. Marx argued that the bourgeoisie (owners) give proletariats (workers) just enough to survive, but ultimately the workers are exploited.

However, sociologists recognize that social stratification is a society-wide system that makes inequalities apparent. While there are always inequalities between individuals, sociologists are interested in larger social patterns. Stratification is not about individual inequalities, but about systematic inequalities based on group membership, classes, and the like. No individual, rich or poor, can be blamed for social inequalities. The structure of society affects a person’s social standing. Although individuals may support or fight inequalities, social stratification is created and supported by society as a whole.

Factors that define stratification vary in different societies. In most societies, stratification is an economic system, based on wealth, the net value of money and assets a person has, and income, a person’s wages or investment dividends. While people are regularly categorized based on how rich or poor they are, other important factors influence social standing. For example, in some cultures, wisdom and charisma are valued, and people who have them are revered more than those who don’t. In some cultures, the elderly are esteemed; in others, the elderly are disparaged or overlooked. Societies’ cultural beliefs often reinforce the inequalities of stratification.

One key determinant of social standing is the social standing of our parents. Parents tend to pass their social position on to their children. People inherit not only social standing but also the cultural norms that accompany a certain lifestyle. They share these with a network of friends and family members. Social standing becomes a comfort zone, a familiar lifestyle, and an identity. This is one of the reasons first-generation college students do not fare as well as other students.

Other determinants are found in a society’s occupational structure. Teachers, for example, often have high levels of education but receive relatively low pay. Many believe that teaching is a noble profession, so teachers should do their jobs for love of their profession and the good of their students not for money. Yet no successful executive or entrepreneur would embrace that attitude in the business world, where profits are valued as a driving force. Cultural attitudes and beliefs like these support and perpetuate social inequalities.

1) Social stratification is a crucial concept in sociology, it is a system that emphasizes the classification and categorization of people occupying a society into social strata, level or class based on some socio-economic factors like wealth, income, race, power, gender, and occupation. These simply means that people who fall into the category of high income, good occupation, superior race are classified to occupy the upper echelon of the society and those who do not fall into any of these category are referred to as the lower class.

However it is important to note that social stratification is an important system of the society but it also has its consequences on the people of the society. As we can recall that social stratification brought about what we have today as the upper, middle, and lower class. These various categories are derived as a result of power and wealth. One of the consequences of social stratification is that it has divided the society into various part. There are no equality again. For instance a person working as a cleaner is in a different level where the C.E.O of the company is working. They both cannot enter the same car, eat from the same place or eve wear the same cloth. No one told them to act that way but they already know that they are not on the same level therefore subconsciously they start putting themselves in various levels that they belong

It is vital to note that social stratification causes social disparity. Social disparities occur when the resources available to a society are distributed unevenly. For example, a rich retired man doesn’t have to wait on a long queue to get his pension money because it is sent to his bank account but then a poor man will wait on a long queue and will be under the sun and yet he won’t still be given the money simply because he isn’t rich or influential. Another example is that the rich people get all they need such as good light, good road, good hospitals, all this are given to the benefit of the rich but the poor get nothing at all, all they get is the bad roads in their rural areas or the bad hospitals and they aren’t financially capable of going to the big and good hospitals so they manage the little they have. It is an unjust system that recognizes the Monopoly of power and wealth within a particular group that oppresses the group that does not belong to the monopolistic group.

Another consequence of social stratification is that it also affects the life chances, life style and prestige of individuals, most people who fall into the lower class have their life chances, style of living and prestige affected as a result of social stratification

Social stratification creates emotional stress and depression for people belonging to the lower class as a result of unequal access to wealth and power which people of the upper class possess. A person who is in the lower class can’t be happy with his or her position because being in the lower class reduced the level at which one get their needs. If I was in the lower class I will not be happy about it because I would lack so many things and that alone can make me depressed.

Also another consequence of Social stratification is that it brings about differences in people in terms of income and a good measures associated with social position, education, health, and psychological wellbeing. The lower class don’t earn as much as the middle class and neither does the middle class earn more than the upper class. If there was nothing like social stratification then we would all be earning the same income and there would be nothing like the lower class, middle class or the upper class.

In conclusion social stratification brings about disparity in the society which in turn can bring about society or societal downfall or unrest.

2) Social mobility is the degree to which an individual’s family or group social status can change throughout the course of their life through a system of social hierarchy or stratification. Subsequently, it is also the degree to which an individual’s or group’s descendants move up and down the class system. This movement can be the result of achievements or factors beyond control (Grusky & Manwai, 2008; Stark, 2007).

Sociologists were fascinated to first learn of social mobility because of the regularity with which people ended up in roughly the same social position as their parents with each passing generation. Despite some intergenerational movement up and down the social ladder, those born into wealthy and influential families are likely to live their lives as wealthy and influential people, while those born into abject poverty are not. This regularity in social mobility, according to sociologists, is the result of inherited wealth, useful social contacts and education.

Social mobility refers to the shift in an individual’s social status from one status to another, the shift in status can either be higher, lower, vertical or horizontal.... Social mobility can take different forms and people can experience different types of mobility in different stages of their lives. The different types of mobility are

(I) horizontal mobility: - this emphasizes when people change their occupation but not their social status. E.g. Mr. Kay left the Concord school for lead British school there is a change of occupation but the social status remains the same... t can be denoted by this line

(ii) vertical mobility:- it can be denoted using this line | movement of social status can be ascending or descending order meaning that one can move to the lower class to the upper class or from the upper class to the lower class

(III) Upward mobility: - this simply means moving from the lower status to the upper status Mr. a becoming wealthy as a result of winning 100m in a bet

(iv) Downward mobility: - it is the direct opposite of upward mobility, the social status movement emphasizes moving from higher social status to a lower social status

Positive Effects.

The under listed are some of the positive effects.

■ Improvement in living standards: Social mobility brings about improvements in the living standards of people. People change their professions or move from rural to urban areas, which ultimately improve their living standards. What this is trying to explain to us is that people grow from one place to another. A person that was in the lower class before can start growing and move to the upper class that simply means that such person is getting improvement in standard of living and then he or she leave the rural area and move to the urban area.

■ Improvement in national unity: Social mobility causes people to move to other parts of the country. We tend to go from one place to another in relate with other people from different part of the world. For instance we see people from Hausa living in Yoruba land, that way they all relate as one and don’t see each other like they are different from themselves. In doing so they interact with new cultures, which increase social interaction with different communities. On a large scale, such interaction increases national unity and solidarity.

■ Greater affinities for personal freedom: Due to social mobility, level of education increases, which invariably results in an increase in affinities for personal freedom.

■ Obsolete customs: When people interact with new cultures they learn new customs, tradition, and norms. People may adopt certain positive traditions that replace negative or obsolete norms. For example we see people who are from Yoruba land and they speak fluent Hausa this is due to social mobility where everyone relate with one another.

Negative Effects

The under listed are some of the negative effects.

■ Ethnic and cultural problems: Social mobility can have a negative impact on the demography of a territory. It can create a state of collision between the interests of different groups, which, in turn, can create problems of social disorder. The constant standoff between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria is one example.

■ Increases in crime: Social mobility can increase the crime rate. Because of social mobility a taste for lavish lifestyles has been encouraged in people as they forgo hard work for get-rich-quick schemes. In addition, in the absence of the head of the family, children can become delinquent which also leads to increased crime.

■ Unemployment: Social mobility can increase unemployment. In every society, some professions are highly valued. Consequently, people move to those professions in great numbers. As a result of this, they disregard or devalue other older professions which people may no longer want to fill.

■ Unequal division of population: Social mobility can bring about the unequal distribution of population in industrial areas and cities.

References

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