

Social and Economic Class à la Max Weber

Max Weber

- German social scientist
- He helped pioneer modern day discipline of sociology (sometimes called the “father of sociology”)
- three-component theory of economic, social, and political stratification (Weberian Stratification)

Power

- Power is the ability to get your own way with others, regardless of their ability to resist you.
- Power derives from the individual’s ability to control various social resources.

Weberian Stratification

- Social stratification results from the unequal distribution of resources within a society.
- Economic situation in society is one’s social class (access to capital).
- One’s status situation in society is one’s status class (honor and prestige).
- One’s political situation is one’s party class. This is less relevant for your purposes.

Economic Situation (Economic Class)

- material resources (tangible advantage): money, land, houses, etc.
- social resources (intangible advantage): education, opportunities, knowledge, etc.

Status Situation (Social Class or Prestige)

- restricted pattern of social intercourse: with whom one associates and the benefits derived thereof
- sharing of food and other benefits within groups: with whom one dines; things such as the clubs one joins or the parties one attends
- status conventions or traditions: manners, customs, affectations, etc.
- acquisition or avoidance of certain opportunities: some things are desirable, some things undesirable dependent on one’s status within a society

Political Situation (Political Power)

- again, not terribly useful for your purposes, since we did not use Weber to analyze political content

The Overlap of Economic and Social Class

- Social status often overlaps with economic status, but this is not always true.
- Think, for example, of the difference between “old money” and “new money.”