

Sociology 125 (Social Stratification)
Spring 99

I believe that I am close to being in the middle class. My job has a lot to do with this. I am currently the office manager of a _____ Insurance office. I work directly with the agent. I am licensed and along with that came a nice raise. I live at home with my father and his family. He is in the upper middle class and I feel has a lot to do with my class. Being a full time student at university also elevates my class standing. I am financing my own vehicle and I am establishing good credit. 2/1/99

My underlying assumptions regarding my own class position upon entering Sociology 125 were what I expressed above. These beliefs were supported, along with being instilled deeper, based upon the many readings undertaken within this course. Of these readings, the particular ones that helped to reinforce my beliefs were those of Weber, the Ehrenreich's, MacLeod, and Luker.

According to Weber one's class was determined by their position within the labor market, income, consumption, and property. In Weber's reading "The Significance of Property Classes," he states that the property class "has marketable abilities through training who are in a position to draw their support from these sources (123)." Based upon my schooling level and the type of job that I have, I believe that I would fit into this category. I have gone through extensive training at work in order to become licensed. In order to receive my insurance license, I underwent a mandatory fifty-two hour course and upon completion took the state insurance licensing exam. I also must keep up with changing times to make sure that I will be marketable in the future, thus I must do continued education each year. Of the almost six years that I have worked, I have gained skills in customer service that are extremely vital in our ever changing market.

Another reading of Weber that deepens my class position is "The Significance of Acquisition and Social Class." Weber's acquisition class can be interpreted as a middle class. A social class which fell under the acquisition class was the intelligentsia. The intelligentsia are described as those "without independent property and the persons whose social position is primarily dependent on technical training (124)." The intelligentsia rely mainly on their education. I believe that I also fit this middle class description of Weber. I am not a property owner, but an owner of knowledge. I have taken on a vast amount of training within the university to set to better my future.

The Ehrenreich's reading "The Professional - Managerial Class" was the article that had a very deep impact upon my class position beliefs. The professional-managerial class is defined as "consisting of salaried mental workers who do not own the means of production and whose major function in the social division of labor may be described broadly as the reproduction of capitalist culture and capitalist class relations (12)." Two key words of this definition are "mental workers". based upon my education and occupation I consider myself to be a mental worker. I rely on my own thinking and understanding process to get the job done. I am constantly thinking of new ways to do my job and I consider hypotheses that I would like to explore. a key marketing aspect that the PMC have is their specialization. Not only am I specialized within the job market, but also within my education. This specialization will only continue to increase as I hope to pursue my masters and Ph.D. within sociology.

Another point that the Ehrenreich's have stated is that we tend to marry within our class. The Ehrenreich's describe this as a "common culture (29)." A point that the...

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