

Sociology 125, Spring 1999

## Final Essay

Throughout this course Class and Inequality, I have picked up on a lot of complex and diverse concepts. How can't you, being that we are in America, studying about America which is a class system and very unequal. Everything or close to it that has to do with this society falls under either one of these categories- or both. So within the parameters of the guidelines set forth for this paper I will take 3 authors and their perspectives on class. I will look at Kingsley and Moore and project the light they shed on the issue of class through stratification. Another interesting aspect of class that I have acquired through this course is the achievement ideology. This ideology was brought forth by author Jay MacCleod in his book, Ain't No Making It. Especially interesting to me was how within the same society you can have some classes who could feel as if this is the way it is and have others who see it to be a bunch of bologna- a real dillusion. Also the dynamic of how some people within a class depending on race will or won't take the achievement ideology and it's effect at face value. Lastly, I will look at how Fantasia defines "class conscience" and how collective action tie into and spring up out of this concept.

Kingsley and Moore make the universal statement that no society in the world is classless. They say that stratification within a society is essential to it's function because it motivates individuals along with creating competition that makes the society work and function at it's highest possible level. Stratification makes jobs that are thought to have a great amount of importance to be the ones that carry the most profitable rewards. This being through power and/or prestige and money. These jobs are also the ones that are said to require the most talent or at least a trade that requires a talent that is scarce. David and Moore also say that a lot of these jobs that are held in high esteem are like that for political and religious purposes. For this reason these jobs are important and are held in high regard. This is also why societies close some people out by regulating the entrance of persons into positions.

First off how I feel stratification and this concept of closure not letting certain people into a specific job or field of work affects my life is that it is the root of discrimination. Stratification is a divisive mechanism that puts some people within the framework of the game, and leaves others out in the cold. Stratification leaves others in the cold in that society creates an aura that says the people from lower classes of society don't deserve the same respect as those higher up in society. This is also an inherent characteristic of stratification, which is some are higher than others and others are lower than some. This is where the inequality sets in. In my lifetime I have always since my conception been in the so-called lower stratum of this society. I always felt as if and was told that it was my race. That being a black man here in America I would never get a fair shake. When I was young I couldn't see it but as I have grown and look back hindsight shows me that my education wasn't up to standard because of my class. Going to school in the Del Paso Heights section of Sacramento less emphasis was put on these children's education. This manifested itself in less money spent and the notion or the attitude by teachers and family that they didn't expect much from the children. This attitude led to teachers not

disciplining students and when it came to correcting them they didn't because how I see it they thought they didn't know any better and there was no use in teaching them because they couldn't learn anyway.

(end of excerpt)