

THE SCIENTIFIC DEFINITION OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION, AS A HISTORICAL PROCESS OBJECTIVE

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ABSTRACT: *In this paper the author defines the nature of social stratification and social classes, and the main concepts associated with this process, as well. The work describes the concept of "social stratification" from the point of view of some classic economists and sociologists. In the work is described a contemporary interpretation of the social stratification. Also is given a qualitative assessment in the Republic of Moldova and the attached well-known classification of social stratification in its conditions.*

KEY WORDS: *social stratification, social strata, inequality, group classes*

1. INTRODUCTION

Most of the societies are organized in such way that their institutions do not distribute equally the benefits and responsibilities among the various categories of people and social groups. Sociologists call "social stratification" position of individuals and groups from top to bottom in horizontal layers, or strata, on the basis of inequality in income, education level, the amount of power, professional prestige. From this perspective, the social order is not neutral, but helps to reach the goals and interests just of some individuals and social groups more than others.

The question like «who gets anything and why?" was actual in all times for Humanity. The first Jewish prophets, who lived 800 years BC, in particular, Amos, Micah and Isaiah, have consistently blamed the rich and powerful members of society. Micah, for example, blamed for the fact that they took over the fields and houses of their neighbours were "filled with violence, demanded bribes and engaged in dishonest and treacherous acts. Greek philosophers, including Platon and Aristotel, discussed in detail the institution of private property and slavery. In his work called "The State" in 370 BC. e. Platon wrote: "Any city, however small it may be, is effectively divided

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into two halves: one for the poor, another for the wealthy, and they fight amongst themselves." In the Indian Laws of Manu, written in about 200 BC, describes the creation of the world in which social inequality is sent down by the gods for the common good. In the Anglican hymn have these words: Rich man - in his castle, Poor people - at his gate, God has one high and one low, and determine to whom, than to have. Thus, the famous polar opposite views on social stratification: some, like Micah and Plato, criticized the existing system of distribution, others, like the Brahmins, supported it. In real life, inequality of humans plays a huge role. Inequality - a specific form of social differentiation in which some individuals, sectors, classes are at different stages of vertical social hierarchy, have unequal life chances and opportunities to meet needs. Inequalities - criteria by which we can place one group above or below others. Social structure occurs at the social division of labour and social stratification - about the public distribution of the fruits of labour, i.e. social benefits.

2. THE DEFINITION OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION AND SOCIAL CLASSES NATURE

Thus, from the introduction of our research topic, we note that the issue of social stratification was stood in ancient times. At present, this question remained, but changed attitude towards it, or simply takes other forms and evolves according to historical cycles and processes. Most researchers believe that social stratification is a hierarchically organized structure of social inequality that exists in a particular society at a certain historical period of time. Hierarchically organized structure of social inequality can be described as a division of society into strata. Layered, tiered society in this case can be compared with the geological layers. However, compared with a simple bundle of social stratification has at least two significant differences. First, the stratification is a rank-stratification, where the higher layers are in a privileged position (in relation to the possession of resources or capacity to receive remuneration) than the lower layers. Secondly, the upper much smaller than the number of incoming members of their society.

V. Marx and Weber on the classes: Despite the fact that social class is one of the central concepts in sociology, on the content of this concept still there is not a single, strong point of view. For the first time a comprehensive picture of the class society were described in the works of Karl Marx. We can say that the social classes related to Marx - is economically deterministic and genetically conflicting groups. The basis of division into groups is a property presence or absence. Antagonistic classes, which inevitably appear in any society with a complex hierarchical structure based on inequality. Marx also admits the existence in society of small social groups which generate some class conflicts. Studying the nature of social classes, Marx made the following assumptions: 1. Any society produces a surplus of food, shelter, clothing and other resources. Class differences increase when one of the groups assigns resources that are not immediately consumed and are not currently necessary. Such resources are considered as private property. 2. Classes are defined based on the fact of possession or produced not possession property. In different historical periods, there were various

types of property which have been crucial in human relationships, but all social systems are based on two antagonistic social classes. 3. Class relations involve exploitation of one class by another, which is the cause of class conflict, which is the basis for social change, place in society.

Despite the revision, in terms of contemporary society, many of the class theory of Marx, remain relevant in respect of existing in our time of social structures. This especially can be applied to situations of interclass conflicts, strife and struggles to change the conditions of resource allocation. In this regard, Marx's theory of class struggle now has many followers among sociologists and political scientists of many countries. The most influential, alternative to Marxist theory of social classes are related in works of Max Weber. Unlike Marx Weber identifies other factors that influence the formation of relations of inequality. In particular, he examines the prestige as one of the most important features of social class. However, he considers the relationship between the possibility of attaching to a higher status and attractive social class, while assuming that the class is a group of people with similar capabilities, "push" or opportunities for career. Just as Marx, Weber, as the base of the status distribution in the society and the basis for the formation of social classes see attitude towards property. However, the division within the main classes (intermediate class) made by Weber, is much more important than Marx one. For example, Weber shares the class of owners and "commercial", class is divided into several sub-classes, the working class (depending on the type of ownership of enterprises in which they work), based on one of those opportunities to enhance their status, they possess. Unlike Marx, Weber delimited bureaucracy as a class, as an essential link power in the modern society. Weber first time lays the basis for class division system of stratification that exists in this society.

3. MODERN CONCEPTS OF CLASSES

Attempts to explain the mechanism of social stratification was not done once at different periods of human history. However, only in the last decade of this century we have been able to comprehend the scientific complex social problems, without understanding that it is impossible to explain the processes taking place in society, imagine the future of this society.

A. *Functionalist's theory of stratification.* T. Parsons believes that the bases of stratification are the value orientations of members of society. This estimation and assignment of people to certain social strata is carried by the following basic criteria: Qualitative characteristics of members of society, which are determined by genetic traits and prescribed status (origin, family ties, personal qualities and abilities); Role-playing features, which are determined by a set of roles which the individual performs in society (position, level of professionalism, knowledge, etc.); The characteristics of ownership of material and spiritual values (money, means of production, artistic works, the possibility of spiritual and ideological influences on other sectors of society, etc.).

Currently, the most influential point of view on the formation of social strata can be considered the theory of stratification of K. Davis and W. Moore. According to this theory, every society must solve the problem of placement and motivation of the

individual in the social structure. Social order in a society based on the distribution of individuals on social status (in accordance with their functionality, their maximum contribution to achieving the goals of society). To implement the distribution of individuals on social status and their motivation is realized by compensation practices, which can be used to encourage the successful implementation of the individuals of their roles, and for maintaining of unequal distribution system of rewards in accordance with the occupied status. Thus, in any social system of rewards should be distributed differentially in accordance with social status. For this purpose, are created and legitimized the rights of every social status in respect of remuneration from the society. Why in a society appears a social and remuneration inequality? According to K. Davis and W. Moore, the social positions have an higher rank, because they have a functional significance or importance to society, but it requires more skills and better training. Thus, in terms of Functionalist's theory, inequality and the distribution of a status in society based on the functional significance of this status, requirements for execution and difficulty of filling the role of social status, are functionally necessary to society. It should be noted that this theory of stratification is currently the most developed and theoretically justified. However, many modern scholars find in this theory a number of significant shortcomings. One of the major weaknesses of the theory is rightly considered to ignore power factor, which plays a significant role in the distribution of rewards in societies. Modern theories of social class are also based on stratification. Most sociologists see in relation to the ownership of the key differences, however, recognize their class, factors such as seniority status, power, prestige, etc. If a social stratum can mean the division of the parameters, the social class is not only enlarged strata.

B. *The class structure of society Models.* Currently, there are many models of class structure. The sociologists at present come to the view that in modern society the basis of these structures remain unchanged, but change only a few structural units. These changes are based on cultural, economic, structural and other characteristics of each society. This definition of the class positions of individuals by using composite indices assessing the positions of individuals on many dimensions. The models include the stratification adopted in western sociology should be considered the most famous model of W. Warner. It should be said that all modern Western model of the class structure of society in varying degrees, contain elements of Warner. These elements include the following: 1. High-upper class includes the representatives of dynasties, with very significant resources of wealth, power, prestige throughout the society. Their situation is so firmly, that does not depend on competition, the rate of securities and other socio-economic changes in society. Very often, the representatives of this class do not even know exactly the size of their empires. 2. Lower - upper class includes the bankers, prominent politicians, owners of large firms that have achieved higher status in the competition or because of different qualities. They can not be taken in the upper-upper class, as either considered upstarts (in terms of representatives of top-top), or do not have enough influence in all areas of society. Typically members of this class are tough competition and depend on the political and economic situations of the society. 3. Principal - the middle class includes wealthy businessmen, hired managers firms, major lawyers, doctors, scientific elite. Representatives of this class do not claim to

influence across the state, but in a fairly narrow areas of their position quite firmly and steadily. In their activity areas, they have high prestige. 4. Lower - middle class wage earners are - engineers, medium and low ranking officials, teachers, scientists, heads of departments in enterprises, skilled workers, etc. At present these classes in the developed western countries are the most numerous. His main aspirations are to improve status within the class, and career success. In this regard, for representatives of this class a very important emphasis is on the economic, social and political stability of society. Speaking of stability, the representatives of this class are the main support of the existing power. 5. High - lower class wage earners are not included in the previous one. The dependence on the more senior levels of society for livelihood leads to the fact that this class throughout history fought for better living conditions. 6. Lower - lower class includes poor people, unemployed and other marginalized groups.

4. SOCIAL AND CLASS STRUCTURE OF THE MOLDOVIAN SOCIETY

Along with the collapse of such giant as the former Soviet Union, in the space of the former Soviet bloc and the Soviet republics began a path of development, in another capacity and dimension. Experience with Warner's model showed that, as presented, it is in most cases it is unacceptable for the countries of Eastern Europe and the Republic of Moldova, where in the course of historical processes, present a different social structure, there were radically different status groups. However, at present, due to the changes that have occurred in our society, many elements of the structure Warner can be used in the study of the social classes in Moldova. Modern research of factors, criteria and patterns of stratification of the Republic of Moldova can identify strata and groups, differing social status, and place in the process of reforming the Moldovan society. Under the current situation, especially during the last 5-7 years, the Moldovan society is structurally divided into four social classes: *upper, middle, and lower base, as well as of out of the socialized "social bottom"*.

The upper layer includes, above all, real ruling class, acting as the principal agent of reform. This includes elite and under elite group occupying the most important positions in government, in economic and power structures. They are united by the fact finding power and possibility to have a direct impact on the reform process.

The middle layer is the middle layer of the embryo in the Western sense of the term. Most representatives of this layer have neither providing personal independence capital, nor the level of professionalism that meets the requirements of post-industrial society, nor the high social prestige. Furthermore, while this layer is too small in number and can not serve as a guarantor of social stability. In the future, full middle layer of Moldova is formed on the basis of social groups that make up today, corresponding to the "Proto". This small-scale entrepreneurs, managers of medium and small businesses, middle tier of the bureaucracy, senior officials, most qualified and capable professionals, workers and others.

Basic social layer covers most of the Moldovan society. His representatives have secondary vocational qualifications and the potential for limited employment potential. To the base layer is the main part of the intellectuals (professionals), semi intellectuals (associate professionals), technical personnel, workers of mass

occupations of trade and service, most of the peasantry. Although, social status, attitudes, interests and behaviour of these groups are different, their role in the transition process quite similar - it is primarily an adaptation to changing conditions in order to survive and to sustain the progress status.

The bottom layer encloses the main, socialized part of society, its structure and function is the least clear. The distinctive features of its members are low-activity-potential and the inability to adapt to the harsh socio-economic conditions of the transition period. Basically, this layer consists of poorly educated, older, not too healthy and strong people, from those who do not have jobs, and often a permanent occupation, place of residence of the unemployed. Signs of the representatives of this layer are very low personal and family income, low education, unskilled labour, or the lack of permanent employment.

Social bottom is mainly characterized by isolation from social institutions of society at large, to be offset involvement in specific criminal and quasi-criminal institutions. Representatives of the social bottom are criminals and half-criminal elements - the thieves, gangsters, drug dealers, the owners of brothels, both large and small crooks, hired killers, as well as the weak people - alcoholics, drug addicts, prostitutes, vagrants, homeless, etc.

5. CONCLUSION

The social stratification is actually a social heterogeneity, where exists inequality, inequality of social status of people and their groups. The social stratification represents the process and result of the social differentiation into various groups that differ by their social status. A criterion for division of society into strata can be extremely varied, moreover, both objective and subjective. But most common are such as: profession, income, property, participation in government, education, prestige, self-esteem a person's social position, etc. According to researchers, the middle class in modern industrial society determines the stability of the social system and at the same time gives it momentum, as the middle class - is primarily a highly productive and highly qualified, proactive and enterprising worker. Moldova belongs to a mixed type of stratification. Our middle class is emerging, and this process is of key importance and wide for the formation of a new social structure. If we analyze the current process, or situation of withdrawal dangerous line that if society is crossed by, it can be risky for the statehood of the Republic of Moldova. By this attitude, it is also determined such negative processes like a mass exodus of overseas primary labour reserve, the failure of legislation, the slow democratic processes, etc.

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