

I

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION—
SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

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This volume is devoted to the broad, but central, theme of social stratification. That all societies and, indeed, all social groupings are in some measure stratified is not in question. The strata are, at one level, maintained as the result of individual recognitions and responses, acts of deference and superiority, by which social position is tenuously preserved. The crystallization of the different elements of stratification may, as has been exemplified by Weber and his successors, be considered in relation to at least three areas or arenas—power, status and class. These in turn reveal complex problems of identification, access, consolidation, participation and demonstration of the attributes considered appropriate to each area—quite apart from the inter-relationship between them. The establishment of these dimensions of stratification may themselves give rise to further considerations of relative advantage and disadvantage, ‘relative deprivation’ as Runciman¹ has described it, and differential attainment of those elements of ‘power and privilege’ which may be prized in any particular society.

The lack of uniformity in society, the existence of ‘all sorts and conditions of men’ has provided a central thread in the development of thinking about society. The distinctions between citizen and slave, between seigneur and serf, between master and servant, between those fit to govern and those fit to be governed, between king and commoner, between bourgeois and proletarian have been essential components of both conservative and radical social thought. These divisions are just as necessary a part of the structural analysis of society by St Thomas Aquinas as they are to that of Marx. The argument turns round their form and function.

The study of social stratification has produced an extensive theoretical discussion as well as a rich variety of empirical evidence. It is clear, however, that the description of particular stratification systems is an immensely complex task in which a variety of overlapping and subtly interwoven factors must be considered. Both the conceptual framework and the empirical tools employed need continual development and

¹ W. G. Runciman, *Relative Deprivation and Social Justice* (London 1966).

assessment. The investigator in this field must not merely measure and analyse the characteristic pattern of stratification within a given society. He must also endeavour to assess its meaning within the broad social processes of the society. As he breaks down the varieties and components of the stratification system and the different conceptualizations of it that are held he must attempt to disentangle precise terminological meanings. Having established indices of stratification he must validate their utility as measures of real or imagined 'situation' more or less crystallized and more or less related to other sets of 'situations' in terms of the extent to which they attract deference, give similar or different life-chances, have differential access to, or differentially utilize, power.

Three main areas may be distinguished in the attempt to describe social stratification. The first is the delineation and description of the forms and elements of stratification. Here the tradition which has developed through the work of Marx and Weber has contributed most to both the definition of class and the distinctions between class, status and power structures.

The second concerns the way in which the different strata, as well as the components of the different elements of stratification systems, are arranged and articulated with each other. It is here that the analysis of the function of stratification and its relation to the division of labour has made its most valuable contribution, whether from the more static analysis of 'functionalist' sociology or the more dynamic analysis of social change implied in Marxist, and other, 'conflict' theories.

The third area involves the question of access to and participation in the various strata. This in turn opens up numerous avenues of inquiry into social mobility and life chances as well as the broader questions of the degree of 'openness' or 'closedness' which exists within any particular social system.

These three areas can rarely be explored in isolation. It is, indeed, one of the consequences of the centrality of social stratification that it relates to every aspect of social analysis and research. In almost every study it will appear as a variable which is considered significant by the investigator although the range of definitions which it is given tend all too often to mean that the concept of 'class' becomes a rag-bag, the contents of which are often jumbled together indiscriminately. The measures used by investigators to assess 'class position' are now considerably refined and it is possible to indicate the effects of variables such as occupational position and class position with considerable accuracy. These methods, however, must remain only so good as the conceptual assumptions which lie behind them and it is here that the uncertainties of definition and delineation appear much greater. The difficulties, even in a relatively static analysis, of securing a base which is not itself subject

to unknown shifts, appear to be great even if one takes a fairly objective and verifiable factor such as occupation.¹ The more ephemeral factors such as those subjectively evaluated in terms of social position, status or power are clearly far more difficult to define sufficiently exactly to allow precise measurements to be made. Nevertheless the attempt must be made in order to arrive at an adequate means of describing the web of relationships and their stratified patterning in society.

If these matters are difficult within any particular social system they, of course, become immeasurably more so when attempts are made to compare stratification patterns in different societies with different economic structures. Even within any particular society difficulties arise, particularly when an attempt is made at clarifying primary producers such as farmers in a stratification system based on industrial occupational categories. This is quite apart from the problems involved in categorizing dependent sectors of the population such as the old, the young, and married women (who may or may not continue working during marriage). Even in Britain, which has the highest proportion of its economically active males earning wages and salaries (90 % in 1950), there are difficulties in classifying those who lie outside this work force. With significantly lower percentages of wage and salary earners in countries such as Egypt (44 %) or Pakistan (16 %) the problem is clearly much greater.²

Occupation is only one of the criteria of social stratification, however. Its significance is clearly twofold because it relates to an economic relationship with the means of production but also defines a work-situation which will in turn have consequences on both the consciousness of class identity and also will help to define patterns of status estimation and attitude to the stratification system both within and outside the work-situation. It serves to demonstrate the kind of problems which must be faced if some more adequate framework for discussion is to be found for the dynamic and comparative treatment of stratification in society.

The changes which have been taking place in industrialized societies suggest that both the Marxian and the functionalist theories are inappropriate for the analysis of the competing interests of power élites in a situation where access to power is not necessarily dependent upon either the ownership of property or the 'value' of the performance of needed tasks to the society. The managerial component in industry, in

¹ For two valuable discussions of the question of change in occupational structure see Otis Dudley Duncan, 'Methodological issues in the analysis of social mobility', pp. 51-97 and Wilbert E. Moore, 'Changes in occupational structure', pp. 194-212, both in Neil Smelser and Seymour Martin Lipset (eds.), *Social Structure and Mobility in Economic Development* (London, 1966).

² Moore, 'Changes in occupational structure', p. 211. These figures are taken from the table compiled by Moore from the United Nations *Statistical Yearbook* (New York, 1955).

particular, introduces new criteria for social differentiation and the manipulation of power which are not readily defined by either of these theories. The borderlines between working class and middle class have already been explored by Lockwood and his colleagues.¹ Their work raises important questions about the character of the divisions themselves and the extent to which contemporary 'privatization' among the so-called 'affluent workers' represents not so much *embourgeoisment* which these authors discount, as emancipation, or perhaps withdrawal, from the traditional divisions by which class position and identity have been defined. A similar disassociation from traditional patterns is also observable in the apparent shifts of political commitment and patterns of voting in this group.

However, Lockwood² has, himself, provided a very necessary corrective to the assumption that these phenomena, among a small proportion of workers who are well paid, represents, in any real way, 'the working class'. 'The comparison between the "new" and the "old" must guard against the mistake of comparing the most prosperous and least socially distinctive sections of the working class of today with the least prosperous and most socially distinctive sections of the working class yesterday.'³

In the same paper Lockwood refers to the different dimensions of class crystallization that must be taken into account to gain a clear picture of what is happening. Apart from work, life in the family and participation in community social activities are likely to provide the main arenas where a man can see how he is treated by others. On the basis of the treatment he receives he is likely to define not only his aspirations but also his attitudes and expectations.

A refreshing approach to this problem of individual participation in social stratification processes is suggested by Berger and Luckmann.⁴ They comment on the consequences for personal identity of what they call a 'relatively fluid' stratification system in which some divorce has occurred between the traditionally associated components of class, status and power. The consequences for the individual actor are to be measured in the attempts made by individuals to assess their own position *vis-à-vis* that of others in a like, but different status. Such subjective evaluations as these may operate in relation to aspects of class or status or power independently or in varying degrees of association. The evaluation of these 'dislocations' and new crystallizations may be one of the most fruitful means of explaining the dynamics of social stratification in the future.

¹ D. Lockwood, *The Blackcoated Worker* (London, 1958); J. H. Goldthorpe, *et al.* 'The affluent worker', *Sociology*, 1 (January 1967), 11–39.

² D. Lockwood, 'The new working class', *European Journal of Sociology* (1960), pp. 248–59.

³ *Ibid.* p. 251.

⁴ P. Berger and T. Luckmann, 'Social mobility and personal identity', *European Journal of Sociology*, v, 2 (1964), 331–44.

II

In his 1953–54 trend report on ‘Social Stratification’, Donald MacRae cited T. H. Marshall’s dictum that sociology was in danger of turning too much to either the stars (vast generalization) or to the sand (minute empiricism) and expressed the fear that in the field of stratification studies had all too often wallowed in the quicksand.¹ The intervening period since 1954 has certainly added enormously to the wealth of detailed empirical study but it has also, and particularly in the last few years, yielded a number of important contributions that lie at least ‘in orbit’ somewhere between stars and sand.

In both the ‘conflict’ and the ‘functionalist’ traditions there has been a discernible move away from ideological presuppositions and a consequent emphasis, not merely on the minutiae of empirical analysis but on the fundamental components of stratification systems themselves. Some important signposts of this shift should be mentioned here. The debate initiated in the United States by Kingsley Davis and Wilbert E. Moore’s paper ‘Some Principles of Stratification’² which appeared in 1945 has continued and has been sustained and developed both by its proponents and its critics. A recent book which appeared at the end of 1967 by Tumin, one of the original critics, continued the debate, although not, I believe, introducing any new elements to it.³ Tumin argues persuasively against those defences of the functionalist stratification model which have been established on the basis of differential sacrifices deserving differential rewards. He claims that this argument does not hold up since ‘prolonged training periods (are) important and gratifying advantages enjoyed by a small élite: chances to have their minds and sensibilities trained, their tastes refined and their perspectives enlarged.’⁴ It is less easy, on the other hand, to go along with his main conclusion that since the results of unequal evaluating and rewarding are mixed it is desirable to abandon it in favour of some undefined alternative. One suspects that what is needed to give greater force to his model is a classification of the distinction between objective stratification—distribution of prestige, rewards, power and status in society and the framework of values (evaluation)—within which it is operated.

It may be presumptuous and even unfair to make the suggestion that the debate itself may prove ultimately more interesting to the historian of social thought for its characteristics as a measure of development

¹ D. G. MacRae, ‘Social stratification: a trend report and bibliography’, *Current Sociology*, No. 1 (1953–4), p. 13.

² Kingsley Davis and Wilbert E. Moore, ‘Some principles of stratification’, *American Sociological Review*, 10 (April 1945), pp. 242–9.

³ Melvin M. Tumin, *Social Stratification: the Forms and Functions of Inequality*, New Jersey: Englewood Cliffs, 1967.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 110.

within American sociology as a whole than for any fresh contributions that it has made to the study of stratification as such. One can see in the papers of Davis,¹ Moore,² and their critics Tumin,³ Wrong,⁴ Buckley,⁵ Simpson,⁶ Wesołowski,⁷ and Parsons⁸ the modification of the earlier functionalist position as increasingly both structural and comparative factors necessitated changing the context in which the debate was continued. I believe that one has here one of those examples of ideological commitment already referred to in which the particular blinkers worn by a group of sociologists prevented them from looking squarely at the myths by which their position was supported and to which it has given weight. Much of the demythologization has been carried out by those who have examined some of the factors on which assumptions about the 'efficient division of labour' principle of functionalist theory was based. In particular, Lipset and Bendix's *Social Mobility in Industrial Society*⁹ and Smelser and Lipset's *Social Structure and Mobility in Economic Development*¹⁰ do much to break down the rather static idea of an 'open society' functionally arranging itself in convenient and ordered ranks.

In the case of the 'conflict' approach new dimensions have been developed in the important work of Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society*,¹¹ and this has influenced writers concerned with aspects of class awareness and class consciousness. Ossowski,¹² Wesołowski¹³ and others in Poland have continued a discussion carried further by Wesołowski's paper in this volume of the relevance of either Marxist or Western 'free enterprise' stratification models to socialist societies.

¹ Kingsley Davis, 'The abominable heresy: a reply to Dr Buckley', *American Sociological Review*, 24 (February 1959), pp. 82–3. See also Kingsley Davis, *Human Society* (New York, 1949), especially pp. 366–78, which is a considerably revised version of the theory.

² Wilbert E. Moore, 'But some are more equal than others', *American Sociological Review*, 28 (1 February 1963), pp. 13–18.

³ Melvin M. Tumin, 'Some principles of stratification: a critical analysis', *American Sociological Review*, 18 (August 1953), pp. 378–94.

⁴ Dennis H. Wrong, 'The functional theory of stratification: some neglected considerations', *American Sociological Review*, 24 (December 1959), pp. 772–82.

⁵ William Buckley, 'Social stratification and the functional theory of social differentiation', *American Sociological Review*, 23, 3 (1959), pp. 369–75.

⁶ Richard L. Simpson, 'A modification of the functional theory of social stratification', *Social Forces*, 35 (December 1956), pp. 132–7.

⁷ Włodzimierz Wesołowski, 'Some notes on the functional theory of stratification' in R. Bendix and S. M. Lipset (eds.), *Class, Status and Power*, 2nd edition (New York, 1966), pp. 64–8.

⁸ Talcott Parsons, 'A revised analytical approach to the theory of social stratification' in R. Bendix and S. M. Lipset, *op. cit.* pp. 92–128.

⁹ S. M. Lipset and R. Bendix, *Social Mobility in Industrial Society* (Berkeley, 1959).

¹⁰ N. J. Smelser and S. M. Lipset, *Social Structure and Mobility in Economic Development* (London, 1966).

¹¹ Ralf Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society* (Stanford, 1959).

¹² S. Ossowski, *Class Structure in the Social Consciousness* (London, 1963).

¹³ W. Wesołowski, 'Changes in the class structure in Poland', in J. Wiatr (ed.), *Studies in Polish Political System* (Warsaw, 1967), pp. 33–80.

INTRODUCTION

7

The emphasis of both traditions has increasingly turned toward the problem of meaning and definition of the stratification model employed and the relationship between its parts. The idea of plural stratification consisting of overlapping stratification systems within any given society has become increasingly accepted in both the analysis of less developed and 'modern' societies. Hoselitz¹ has discussed the interaction between 'pre-industrial' and 'industrial' stratification systems and a somewhat similar theme is developed in the community study by Stacey where status evaluation took place in two dimensions, one 'total' and one 'local'.² Lockwood in developing this argument has underlined the generality of these localized systems of status evaluation in industrial groupings such as mining communities.³ One would also expect this to apply to ethnic differences. All of these arguments are concerned to demonstrate the failure of 'holistic' stratification models to act as an adequate analytical tool for the analysis of stratification within complex societies.

Doubt has also been thrown on the extent to which traditional stratification models can be made to apply to new and rapidly changing social situations. It has been suggested by a number of writers that there is a tendency for society to increasingly merge into one great middle class. Porter⁴ in his important book on Canada, for instance, considers this view in some detail and it is also taken up under the general heading of 'embourgeoisment'. That this view is not supported by the facts is the main case of those concerned to stress the continuation of deprived classes of poor within apparently prosperous and 'aggregated' societies. Harrington in his work on the poor in the United States,⁵ Matza⁶ and in England writers such as Wedderburn,⁷ Townsend,⁸ Abel-Smith⁹ and Titmuss,¹⁰ have all been concerned to show how little inequalities have been diminished or wealth distributed as the result of apparently egalitarian 'Welfare State' measures, let alone the process of industrialization itself.

Stimulated largely by David Lockwood's *The Blackcoated Worker*, attention has been increasingly paid to the transitional processes of

¹ Bert F. Hoselitz, 'Interaction between industrial and pre-industrial stratification systems', in Neil J. Smelser and Seymour M. Lipset, *op. cit.* pp. 177-93.

² Margaret Stacey, *Tradition and Change* (London, 1960).

³ David Lockwood, 'Sources of variation in working class images of society', *Sociological Review* (November 1966), pp. 249-67. Fürstenburg adds support to this in his paper in the present volume.

⁴ John Porter, *The Vertical Mosaic* (Toronto, 1965).

⁵ Michael Harrington, *The Other America* (London, 1963).

⁶ David Matza, 'The disreputable poor', in N. Smelser and S. M. Lipset, *op. cit.* pp. 310-39.

⁷ Dorothy Cole Wedderburn, 'Poverty in Britain today—the evidence', *Sociological Review*, x, 3 (November 1962), pp. 257-82.

⁸ Peter Townsend, 'The meaning of poverty', *British Journal of Sociology*, xiii, 3, pp. 210-27.

⁹ B. Abel-Smith and Peter Townsend, *The Poor and the Poorest* (London, 1965).

¹⁰ R. M. Titmuss, *Income Distribution and Social Change* (London, 1962).

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social mobility and in particular the question of the move from the working class to the middle class. The theme of 'embourgeoisment' defended by writers such as Zweig¹ who argued for a process of increasing 'assimilation' of workers into an expanded middle class has been attacked by Lockwood and Goldthorpe, whose own research has done much to substantiate their view. Their work has placed increasing emphasis on the concept of 'work situation' and its influence on the attitudes of workers. They have introduced the concept of 'privatization' to describe the apparent effects of what one might call 'deproletarianization' among workers.²

Such studies of the working class and its redefinition and demarcation have been matched by a number of important contributions on the middle class. Both Odaka³ and Vogel⁴ as well as Dore⁵ have provided a valuable analysis of a rapidly changing middle class pattern in Japan. In Britain and the U.S.A. such studies have tended to concentrate more on what has come to be considered the core determinant of middle class position—professionalization. There have been a number of papers in the American journals of which Wilensky's 'The Professionalization of Everyone?'⁶ provides a valuable guide and raises in a new form the question of the possibility of the merging of society into one large 'professionally qualified' middle class.

Similar themes have been pursued in Britain by Halmos,⁷ Young⁸ and in a number of studies of professional organization such as those of Prandy,⁹ Millerson,¹⁰ Abel Smith and Stevens¹¹ among others.

Increasingly the role of the middle class and élitist groups in developing societies are claiming attention both in terms of recruitment to their number and their consolidation within the social structure. Of a number of studies that have appeared in the last few years that edited by Lipset and Solari¹² on Latin America and that edited by P. C. Lloyd¹³ on Africa give an indication of the range of this material.

¹ F. Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society* (London, 1961).

² The first two substantive reports on this research are: J. Goldthorpe *et al.* *The Affluent Worker: Industrial Attitudes and Behaviour* (Cambridge, 1968); and D. Lockwood *et al.* *The Affluent Worker: Political Attitudes and Behaviour* (Cambridge, 1968).

³ Kunio Odaka, *The Middle Class in Japan*, Contribution to the meetings of the Stratification and Social Mobility Research Committee, Sixth World Congress of Sociology (Evian, 1966).

⁴ Ezra Vogel, *Japan's New Middle Class* (Berkeley, 1963).

⁵ R. P. Dore, *Social Change in Modern Japan* (Princeton, 1966).

⁶ Harold L. Wilensky, 'The Professionalization of Everyone?', *American Journal of Sociology*, LXX, 2 (September 1964), pp. 137–58.

⁷ Paul Halmos, *The Personal Service Society* (London, 1967).

⁸ Michael Young, *The Rise of the Meritocracy* (London, 1961).

⁹ Kenneth Prandy, *Professional Employees* (London, 1965).

¹⁰ G. Millerson, *The Qualifying Associations* (London, 1964).

¹¹ B. Abel-Smith and R. Stevens, *Lawyers and the Courts* (London, 1966).

¹² S. M. Lipset and Aldo Solari, *Elites in Latin America* (London, 1967).

¹³ P. C. Lloyd (ed.), *New Elites in Tropical Africa* (London, 1966).

Another related aspect of the study of stratification has been its effects on the structure of politics and political action. Here again Lipset¹ has made an important contribution in relation to the congruence of political attitudes and behaviour to class position and the theme has been developed more recently by Lipset in a paper on the ‘Changing Class Structure and Contemporary European Politics’.²

It is only possible here in a short introduction to the theme of social stratification to indicate some of the more important ‘growth points’ which suggest both the basis on which future research can be based and also suggest some of the themes which are taken up and developed in the present volume. Before we turn to the present set of papers, however, two further important developments must be noted.

The first is the development, especially in the United States, of the study of status congruence and status crystallization. This theme developed in terms of the extent to which particular status determinants such as ‘occupation’ define patterns of social relations in other spheres of social activity is discussed fully in the paper by Wesołowski and Słomczynski. It is also very relevant to Fürstenberg’s paper and to the paper by Broom, Lancaster Jones and Zubrzycki. Broadly expressed this approach involves the relationship between objective factors such as occupation or income and subjective assessments of status and the distribution of attitudes. Employing social distance measures of prestige a recent study by Laumann³ along these lines both summarizes previous American material and suggests useful features of subjective social distance in an urban setting.

The second development is pointed up by the extent to which common ground can be found between many of these studies in Western ‘post-capitalist’ societies and the socialist societies of Eastern Europe. When viewed from the point of view of the effect of the stratification system on the pattern of social relations it is clear that the ideological overtones of concepts such as ‘classlessness’ or ‘egalitarianism’ can usefully give way to studies of the extent of status congruence in a comparative context. Increasingly in both old and new states the growth of the ‘organized section of the work-force’—e.g. that in a socialized sector or in a similar large-scale enterprise—may influence the extent to which status attributes in different sectors are related to occupational skills and income levels. These ‘social values’, as Wesołowski and Słomczynski define them, are increasingly the determining factors of a stratified pattern of social relationships. Although the effects of restratification

¹ S. M. Lipset, *Political Man* (New York, 1960)—especially Chapter iv: ‘Working-class authoritarianism.’

² *Daedalus* (Winter 1964), pp. 271–303.

³ Edward O. Laumann, *Prestige and Association in an Urban Community* (New York, 1966).

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along these lines, associated with a process of destratification in the private sectors, may be more obvious in a society undergoing a planned social revolution as well as industrialization, the process is matched to a considerable degree in other industrialized or industrializing societies in which the 'social values' already referred to and their distribution have increasing relevance to both national interest and development. The studies presently being undertaken in Eastern Europe can provide important evidence of the ways in which established patterns of social stratification may be modified and the effects which such modification is likely to have. Although it is the work of Polish sociologists which is most widely known outside the socialist countries themselves—and a recent comprehensive volume, *Studies in Polish Political System*,¹ suggests the different dimensions in which their work has developed—there are also a considerable number of valuable studies in different areas of stratification in a number of other socialist countries. A recent bibliography prepared at the Institut für Wirtschaftswissenschaften der Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin (D.D.R.) of works on the theme 'Die Sozialstruktur in den sozialistischen Ländern' includes 190 titles published between 1960 and 1967 and this appears to be only a partial list. It excludes, for instance, a number of important works published toward the end of 1967 such as Helmut Steiner's study (based on secondary sources) of social classes in West Germany² which is to be followed by a comprehensive analysis of social stratification in the D.D.R.

In spite of the diversity of approaches and aspects of the subject of social stratification which have been the subject of recent sociological investigation (and it has only been possible to comment on a few of them here) it would appear that in this area of sociology both methods of investigation and analysis and the development of theoretical models from which hypotheses can be developed is reaching an encouraging stage of maturity in which many of the rifts which have in the past limited comparability have been bridged over. Whether these rifts are seen in terms of micro- or macro-analysis functionalist or consensus versus conflict models or varieties of egalitarian ideology they are seen to pale in significance before the real complexities and fascination of the persistent and subtle features of social stratification itself. Allardt in his paper in this volume asks again the question posed by Lenski's³ recent book—'Is a synthesis possible?' To a much greater degree than we realize when working within particular national contexts it may already have occurred.

¹ Jerzy J. Wiatr (ed.), Warsaw (1967). For an earlier account of the development of sociology in Eastern Europe see: Jerzy J. Wiatr, 'Political sociology in Eastern Europe', *Current Sociology*, XIII, 2 (1964).

² Helmut Steiner, *Soziale Strukturveränderungen im modernen Kapitalismus* (Berlin, 1967).

³ Gerhard Lenski, *Power and Privilege. A Theory of Social Stratification* (New York, 1966).