

Social Aspects of Social Stratification in Azerbaijan

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Abstract: *This article explores the social aspects of stratification, examining how hierarchical structures within societies influence individuals' life chances, relationships, and social interactions. We analyze the concept of social stratification, including its dimensions such as class, race, ethnicity, and gender, and how these intersect to shape experiences and opportunities. The paper discusses the mechanisms through which stratification perpetuates inequality, including access to education, employment, healthcare, and social networks. Empirical evidence is reviewed to highlight the consequences of social stratification on health outcomes, political participation, and cultural capital. Additionally, we delve into the role of social mobility, exploring the factors that facilitate or hinder an individual's ability to move within the social hierarchy. The article concludes by emphasizing the importance of understanding social stratification as a dynamic and multifaceted phenomenon that not only shapes individual lives but also influences societal cohesion and stability. Through a critical lens, it calls for policies aimed at reducing inequalities and promoting social justice to foster a more equitable society.*

Keywords: *stratification, sociology, theory, social movement, classes.*

Introduction

Social consciousness encompasses all contradictions, with the development of human activity, human consciousness and the real conditions under which corresponding behaviors are realized. All of this allows the stated concept to be called the sociology of life, so that it reflects the problems and relationships occurring in the society they live in, their non-indicator of their relationships.

There are specific sociological theories whose research subject is the social processes and events and their specific relations with other events. These relations are an integral part of any sphere of social life. This theory studies global relations, but the characteristic relations within the specific

sphere of social life, such as: sociology of labor, sociology of markets, urban and rural sociology, demographic and migration processes, etc. In this sense, within the framework of social life, social professional and transfer structures, ethnosociology, youth, and family sociology are studied. In turn, political sociology consists of the following theories: sociology of power, sociology of political parties, social movements, sociology, sociology of law, military sociology, and sociology of international relations. As for the sociology of moral life, it consists of education, culture, religion, media, science, literature, and art sociology.

The analysis of the place of systematic and specific social theories in the structure of sociological know-

ledge provides a constant critical article. Systematic and specific social theories combine theoretical-methodological knowledge with empirical knowledge. They express the unity of theoretical knowledge with empirical verifications. However, unlike other sciences, although there is a division between theory and empiricism in sociology, this does not mean that they exist separately and unrelated.

Division according to the social structure of society and the concept of stratification and classes

The history of the development and formation of social stratification theory, as well as the formation and clarification of this concept, is related to certain categories that are related to the development of the system. Stratification comes from the Latin word “stratum” which means layer in geological terms. It is derived from the word. In geology, stratification means layering, the arrangement of rock layers and the earth's layers, and the division of the earth's surface into layers.

Western sociologists have concluded that this geological term is the most accurate and suitable for expressing the processes occurring in social life. They have concluded that it is the most suitable for expressing briefly. American sociologists J. Kyuber and U. Kenker wrote that “whenever a geologist talks about rock, he wants to show that one layer is physically above another layer and or below, and one layer differs from the others. To characterize the differ-

ent positions of members of society, the sociologist uses the image of “layer upon layer”.

The types of this concept are as follows:

- a) the period of slavery;
- b) caste structure;
- c) strata;
- d) classes.

This theory of Western sociology is based on the rejection of the Marxist ideology that society's social structure is the foundation of its existence. The representatives of this idea note that the idea of class allowed for the analysis of the social structure of both the old society and the economically advanced capitalist society, but it is not useful for studying the social structure of modern industrial society¹. This is because, in the current society, the significant shareholders are removed from the management of production and are replaced by daily workers; the property relations associated with this have lost their important status. Therefore, the concept of class has been replaced by the concept of strata. According to this theory, each stratum consists of people with equal salaries, positions, knowledge, and respect.

Within society, there are the wealthy, the middle class, and the poor. A certain group believes that the concept of social stratification better reflects the structured nature of social inequality that exists within society at any historical time. Compared to a simple form, stratification has two characteristics. It differs.

I. The upper classes are in a more privileged position than the lower classes.

II. The number of people in the upper classes in society is significantly lower.

As a result, social layers are a direct collection of adapted strata. They are related to governance, material wealth, science, and respect based on social inequality factors. are divided.

Strata is a social form of people who have indicators similar to the four axes of stratification. It is a social form. In articles related to sociology, different types of stratification are identified. The types are identified². According to a German scholar, the main criterion for stratification is the idea of being respected.

Sorokin's ideas about stratification are particularly noteworthy. He proposes three types of social stratification:

1. The political type refers to the sequences that organize the parties in social life. It indicates the form. It mainly relates to influence, power, etc.

2. Stratification by profession is the categorization of citizens based on their work and employment circles.

It is the division into categories. According to Sorokin, the division of labor forms the basis of society. Two forms of economic structure are considered fundamental:

1. the wealth and poverty of a part or society;

2. the rise and fall of the height of the economic pyramid.

It can be emphasized that the theory of stratification is currently the most used and theoretically conditioned theory. However, a number of researchers say that it still has missing characteristics. One of the main reasons for this is the lack of democratic elements in society.

They advocate for the absence of democratic elements in society. Currently, it is known that the large-scale scientific and technological advancements observed in the developed West bring significant innovations to the stratification structure of these states³.

In Western sociology, the definition of 'stratification' is used in a theoretical and ontological sense. This concept is used. If we talk about the broad meaning of this concept (theoretical aspect), social stratification deals with the issues of social differences in sociology.

There are many definitions of social-class stratification. For example, J. Gertle wrote that stratification is a fundamental part of a specific type and differentiation.

R. Makayver, Q. Kaufman, T. Marshall, and other sociologists explain stratification as a system of social inequality. This definition is the most common. According to A. Giddens, stratification is the structured inequality between different groups. The specific forms of social strata are diverse and numerous. In 1993, the sociology textbook published defined social stratification simply as differing degrees of a system of wealth, power, and prestige. All these definitions are just a small part of expressions. How-

ever, there is still no universal definition accepted by all sociologists. There is no universal definition. The precise definition of the term social stratification is still being researched. Two groups of methods are used to study the stratification of society. The first group consists of objective (qualitative) methods: studying incomes, the number of years of schooling, the level of power, etc., statistics are used. The second group consists of subjective (quantitative) methods: surveys of different groups of the population, the "assessment" method, etc.

In sociology, the precise mechanism of social stratification is explained by a certain category system, for example, "social position", "role", "status", etc. By living in society, a person occupies a certain place in time and space. He is a resident of the country, the village, and works in an institution. In other words, he occupies a certain social position. Status is the sum of certain characteristics of a social position. Status is one of the important criteria for distinguishing groups. There are predetermined (ascribed, unchanging) and subsequently acquired (changing) statuses. A person always has several statuses at the same time, only one of which socially defines. Usually, a person's main status is related to their job. Each status consists of a number of social roles. A role is the expected behavior corresponding to a person's status. It is the expected behavior. A role is the dynamic aspect of stratification, meaning it is its function. Socialization is the process of an individual adopting dif-

ferent roles. Roles can be formal and informal⁴.

T. Parsons proposed to describe roles based on five main characteristics. These are emotionality, method of acquisition (ascribed or achieved), scale, degree of formalization (strict or permissive), motivation (personal or social welfare). According to Parsons, each role is a combination of these five characteristics. Social prestige is an indicator of status. Prestige is the value assigned to a status or position in society. It is the value assigned to a position. A person gains prestige by holding certain positions that correspond to that place.

Social differentiation creates specific forms of social stratification along with the system of social values and cultural standards.

It creates specific forms of social stratification. Social stratification is divided into vertical and horizontal. In horizontal stratification, ethnic, racial, national, group internal and social basic types are emphasized.

In the field of sociology, special importance is given to power. All layers of society distinguish themselves by the criteria of power ownership among themselves. The amount of power a social layer holds indicates its position in society (high or low), welfare level, and other characteristics. In sociology literature, there are many definitions of power, none of which is ideal, meaning they do not fully reflect this social phenomenon. They do not reflect it. Power can be described as the ability to make decisions and influence people. If we de-

scribe it as such, we need to distinguish the powers present in the economy, politics, and the moral life of society.

In a one-dimensional stratification system, the institution of property holds significant importance. The use of statistical data of all individuals in society can be used to divide them into several large social strata, for example: those who work for wages and own production means; those who do not work for wages and own production means; and only those who possess their own labor (intellect), that is, wage workers.

The stratification of any type has a certain value scale with differentiated value, as well as the ranking of individuals and groups. It is intended. In many cases, stratification is a criterion for ranking. It shows development, for example, age, gender, material status, power, and family status. This is a measured type of stratification but plays an important role in relatively simple social structures. They play. From the attention that sociologists have shown to more complex societies, it emerged that different stratification systems arise from a number of additional variables that are multidimensional and arise from the existence of criteria, which broadly divide collectives and societies into socio-cultural groups⁵. This fact led to the emergence of a second method in the distribution of society's participants, which also led to the emergence of a method; this is called multidimensional stratification in sociology.

It got its name; the essence is the extraction of stable values based on common characteristics. Multidimensional stratification has been given great importance in P. Sorokin's research. He wrote: By cumulative social groups, I mean not an individual in interaction but rather individuals related to two, three, and a number of elementary similar characteristics. Thus, the same group of individuals can belong not only to a common religion but also to the same state and also to the same profession.

Cumulative and elementary groups, by combining in a certain way, form a complex social aggregate.

In fact, such complex aggregates can be formed by any population settled in this or other area (city, village, district, country, etc.). The opening of the multidimensional stratification system has been a stage in the future development of stratification theory itself. This has found its reflection in the concept of social group, which has found various forms such as social class, status, and castes. The analysis of social groups by world sociologists shows that little or much attention is permanently given to the stratification of specific institutional sectors. This, in turn, led to debates about the necessity of the emergence of economic and political institutions. The identification of the internal components of social structure is one of the absurd topics in sociology. It is one of the absurd topics. Its important division units include classes, strata, collectives, social-territorial unions, social groups, national-ethnic union forms,

and social-demographic groups. All of these concepts also have their own internal content, which is divided into a number of analytical units – factors⁶.

There are different opinions in sociology regarding its definition. For example, among them, the most significant is let's examine the largest one – the concept of class. Marxist sociology emphasizes the social role of class in the structure, greatly exaggerates it, and specifies the class approach. This includes the economic characteristic of class definition – property takes into account the diversity of forms. It is now known that for a long time in sociological thought, this view has a limited character. When determining the division of society into classes, it is not sufficient to rely solely on forms of property; economic, political, and moral elements must be emphasized in a complex manner. In this sense, modern Western sociology draws attention to the criteria of class affiliation.

Western sociologists see the basis of class differences in how much occupation and wealth there is, emphasizing that the following classes exist in society: upper class, middle class; working class, and finally, the peasant class – traditionally working in the rural economy.

There are also different opinions regarding the social group, which is the next unit of division in social structure. Opinions are expressed. This concept is often used as a synonym for class, but in some cases, when referring to a social group, it means those within classes based on

their occupation, profession-specialization and educational quality, political success, and cultural indicators, social subjects selected based on their degree of social maturity.

The concept of strata is also considered fundamental in social structure. It is accepted as a horizontal division unit within classes and social groups, and constitutes a horizontal division unit within classes, excluding intellectuals – consisting of workers engaged in professional intellectual labor. This division corresponds to the separation of society's representatives into intellectual and physical labor workers. A distinctive feature of intellectuals is their desire for education at the level of vocational and higher education in professional intellectual labor sectors.

Social inequality in human society and the social structure of society has also been reflected in the thoughts of ancient scholars. According to Plato, the social community is divided into two parts: the wealthy and the poor class. Aristotle, however, indicated that it is divided into 3 parts. The opinion of world sociologists is that the social stratification theory has become widely accepted. Proponents of this theory (Weber, Wright, Parkin) show that strata play a fundamental role in social life and the social of society. They noted that their relationships are organized from different layers. The population criteria for dividing into social strata are participation in power, income, and the level of wealth, education, and kinship characteristics are considered. Stratifi-

cation: the theory does not deny the concept of class but gives it another meaning: higher-lower, good-bad, lower-upper categories are proposed. According to this theory, there are three classes that exist: upper, middle, lower. They are also divided into levels. American sociologist Warner claims the existence of classes in his 1941 published work titled 'The City of Yankees'. He broadly claims their existence.

The theory of nobility is also widely spread in the research of Western scholars. This idea suggests that people are not equal from birth, and supposedly this inequality is based on the logical foundation of unequal elements, the highest form of society, called the nobility layer, emerges.

Views on the essence and nature of social structure have been noted in recent philosophy in several communities. American sociologist T. Parsons, P. Lazarsfeld and other thinkers do not accept the existence of strata and instead replace them with social in the form of social institutions and add that the support of these institutions can be re-examined as a whole. They accept the existence of strata and social unions in social life. According to some scholars, social stratification is more accepted by Marxist theorists, but it cannot be considered entirely their discovery. This theory was discovered by many French historians, including F. Min, A. Tyerri, E. Gizo. In their works, the formation of strata and the historical development stages of the struggles between them are analyzed. The economists of that time

prepared and utilized the economic basis of the strata. Since then, the stratified study of social life has taken a central place in social sciences⁷.

The study of stratification holds a central place in social sciences. The concept of social structure refers to the different, stable arrangements of people in society and the institutions they live in. It also implies the different, stable organization of institutions. They are also divided into different social groups, joint and ethnic groups, and their interactions. is explained as relationships and communication.

It encompasses the social structure of people and shows more vividly. Due to various differences, they separate from each other, and their diversity is evaluated in different ways. They can be ranked in this way according to their distribution area as follows:

Family, community, cooperation, social strata, social group, layer, urban and rural population, generations, people, nation, and society as a whole.

The foundation of social structure is the social groups and strata that are integrated with the public labor share. In society, groups and strata are widely spread. Historically, this division of labor coincides with the times when people produced together, and this division becomes social at that time when the various types of labor affect people's lives in a certain sense. When we talk about the social structure of society, it includes political, economic, and moral values, and domestic relations.

When we look into the social structure, we see that it encompasses a very broad concept: it includes the functions shown:

- the general core of people and layers within them and the compatibility of relationships with each other;
- the placement of different social institutions within the general social structure and the location and function of this existence.
- the activities of social entities and organizations that shape the social structure in terms of bilateral relations;
- the main trends of change and development of the social structure.

In this matter, those included in social unions hold a primary position. Social within the composition:

- class unions, social parts, and layers.
- the profession of the working side and its fragmentation into unions
- the social-territorial composition of the population
- the division of people in society among themselves,
- the separation of workers based on the form and function of their work, and this includes specifically physical and mental labor workers as well.
- the division of the population according to social-ethnic unity structure (tribe, clan, people, nation)
- the separation of the population according to social-demographic

division (by family, individual, and generation distribution)⁸.

The main reason for the separation of the population into both urban and rural populations is one of the reasons we can take, and this is the division of labor.

In this regard, the working side begins the process of being divided into various parts. These are the mechanisms of industry, trade, and agriculture. The organization of people according to space is also one of the main factors. This spatial structure is most evident in the formation of society. It emerges as the formation of society. It is precisely how this settlement process is organized that determines the division into rural and urban populations. As a result, the separation of urban and rural spaces can be seen as the main reason for the emergence of the separation of crafts and we can conclude the separation of trade from agriculture.

It is precisely the division of the working parties into physical labor and intellectual labor that is also a product of this division. At the same time, this fragmentation shows more clearly that it indicates that while the first division encompasses the entire population, the second division (physical and intellectual laborers) belongs only to the working groups⁹.

Intellectuals occupy a unique place in the social structure of society in the division of social labor. They hold a distinctive place. Intellectuals formed a primary free social class during capitalism (naturally, its different representatives also existed in the structures

of slavery and feudalism). Intellectuals (from the Latin representatives existed in the structures of slavery and feudalism). Intellectuals (from the word Latin *intelligentsia*, meaning understanding, thinking, intelligent) have a very broad place in society.

They have a very wide place in society according to their internal composition. They formed a special class distinguished by their education, the profession they acquired, and the family they were born into.

Thus, their place in society is chosen and has special characteristics and is selected and has special features. There is also a group of people who, unlike others in society, have economic and legal conditions that are confirmed based on legal rules. This part of society is called *silk*. The *silk* property was an inherited process. This social structure means that it plays a closed character role. Because it is not possible to transition from one to another.

The social aspects of social stratification in Azerbaijan

In the last century, science as a phenomenon influenced social development processes, it has shown. It constituted one of the significant dynamics of industrial society with its defining characteristics. It was one of the dynamics. Again, in the last century, the reasons mentioned and some other reasons led to societies that could not establish science and technology as a defining phenomenon. These societies lagged behind the

historical development line. In fact, the Azerbaijani proximity of society represents a historical period in which these problems were decisive¹⁰.

Those who could not create modern science but continued to produce modern science in the later period were those who sought to activate dynamics in Azerbaijan. They had a need for modern science. Its development faced various difficulties at both theoretical and empirical levels. In the last century, social sciences in Azerbaijan have risen both theoretically and practically. It has risen significantly. Its insufficient development resulted in the incomplete and unsatisfactory completion of the industrialization-centered social transformation process during this period.

The problems arising at various levels in Azerbaijani society are an insufficient use of social sciences in their resolution, and science not becoming one of the constructive elements of the new society at a desirable level, not transforming into one of the constructive elements at a desirable level. This has posed a problem for Azerbaijan in the early 21st century¹¹.

Complex transformation problems in societies facing problems, by trying to understand and solve the problem of science in some way, are to do what is necessary. Many transformation problems in Azerbaijani society can be solved by social science logic [1].

Solving problems aside, it is observed that they become even more unsolvable with new problems. It is observed that it has come. Perhaps

one of the most beautiful examples of the problems that emerged in this process in the last century is the problems of youth. The youth period, which represents a transitional period filled with problems by its nature, is experienced as a period in which problems that are more difficult to solve gain new dimensions in transitional societies like ours. The youth period encompasses an important stage of life in which a person separates from childhood and prepares for adulthood.

In general, the youth age is considered to be between 15 and 24 years. During this period, the individual's personality becomes clearer. In this regard, it is the process of preparation and adaptation to society¹².

It performs important functions during this period. Therefore, the most effective socialization institutions, such as family and educational institutions, must provide positive behaviors and personality models to the young individual, and the cultural codes provided by both institutions must be harmonious and compatible. They should not contradict each other. The physical, spiritual, and socially healthy growth of youth means a healthy society. In a way, youth is the sustainability of society and a source of life for the future. Because today's youth are tomorrow's adults. According to the results of the 1999 census in Azerbaijan, the age group of 15-24 constitutes 20% of the total population of youth. It makes up one-fifth of the population. The education and employment of youth is an important problem. In Azerbaijan, youth has

been described in some sources and literature due to its different characteristics.

They are grouped into two categories: educated and uneducated youth. Educated youth are classified as those with secondary and higher education, while uneducated youth are classified as employed, unemployed, or rural. They have been grouped as field and military youth. In addition, the group of reading and non-reading youth is a special situation that encompasses both. The group of youth in need of special care consists of physically and mentally disabled youth, as well as those who are convicted and imprisoned. It should be noted that in recent years, the experience of agricultural development in the world is in Azerbaijan. As is known, contrary to the general law of compliance, the number of workers in agriculture is increasing.

The share of the agricultural sector in employment is increasing. If in 1995, 30.8% of the population worked in this sector, in 2008 this figure rose to 39.1%. This has increased. In this regard, the role of the agricultural sector in reducing poverty is undeniable [2]. The level of poverty decreased from 46.7% in 2002 to 13.2% in 2008. It has increased. Although there was an economic crisis in the world in 2009, the level of poverty decreased by 11%. The Azerbaijani government aims to reduce the level of poverty in the country by 2 times. The goal has been set. The main objective of agricultural policy is to raise and improve the level of nu-

trition. However, in the fight against poverty, economic development, education, healthcare, and nutrition levels are also extremely important. It should be specifically noted that the regional and sectoral balance in wages can be eliminated, and with a more competent pension policy, it is possible to achieve an increase of about 4-5% in Azerbaijan's middle class. This day, the situation is characterized by the gap between the qualification level of the middle class and the income level they achieve¹³.

This gap is characterized by the situation. The way out of this situation, in our opinion, is the guaranteed increase of the average wage in the country and consequently the increase in the number of middle class representatives. On the other hand, the slightest manifestation of a crisis and resource shortage threatens to significantly reduce the middle class.

If we talk about the concept of social structure, it is natural to say that this existing structure in society plays a more comprehensive and holistic functional role. Of course, it is not enough to only show the composition of the population in terms of social groups at different percentages. It also includes the social relativity and existence in other functions of the structure, mutually with each other, the relationships and characteristics are included here as a main function¹⁴.

Conclusion

Social stratification, far from being a mere economic ordering, is funda-

mentally a social phenomenon, deeply woven into the fabric of human interaction, identity, and collective life. This article has illuminated how the hierarchical arrangement of individuals and groups—primarily along axes of class, status, and power—transcends material inequality to profoundly shape the very essence of social existence.

The core argument underscores that stratification systems are socially constructed and maintained. They are perpetuated not only through the distribution of resources but crucially through social processes: the transmission of cultural capital and disadvantage across generations via socialization and education; the formation of distinct lifestyles, identities, and group affiliations that reinforce boundaries; and the pervasive influence on social networks, interactions, and opportunities for mobility. Legitimation, prejudice, and stigma act as powerful social mechanisms that justify and naturalize inequality, while institutions systematically channel life chances in health, justice, and political participation according to one's position in the hierarchy.

The consequences are profound and pervasive. Stratification dictates differential life experiences and access to opportunity, fostering vastly different realities based on social location. It inherently generates social tension and conflict as groups compete for resources and challenge the legitimacy of the hierarchy while simultaneously impacting the potential for social cohesion and solidarity. Theoretical per-

spectives, from Functionalism's focus on roles to Conflict Theory's emphasis on domination and Weber's multidimensional view, all converge on recognizing stratification as a central, dynamic force structuring society.

In essence, understanding the social aspects of stratification reveals it as the enduring architecture of society. It defines who we interact with, how we see ourselves and others, what opportunities we perceive as possible, and the very contours of collective life. Recognizing stratification as a

complex web of social relations, identities, and processes—actively constructed, contested, and reproduced—is not merely an academic exercise. It is essential for comprehending the roots of inequality, the dynamics of social change, and the persistent challenges and possibilities for creating more just and equitable societies. The study of social stratification, therefore, remains indispensable for grasping the fundamental nature of human social organization.

Notes

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- ³ K. Davis, W.E. Moor, *Class status and power*, Free Press, 1966, pp. 47-48.
- ⁴ P. Sorokin, *Human. Civilization. Society*, trad.ru. *Çelovek, Sivilizasiya. Obşestvo*, Politizdat, Moscow, 1992, p. 47.
- ⁵ М.С. Комаров, Социальная стратификация и социальная структура”, *Социологические исследования*, nr.7, 1992, pp. 62-72.
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- ⁷ K. Davis, W.E. Moor, *op. cit*.
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- ⁹ Z. Hacıyev, *Fəlsəfə*, Bakı, 2012.
- ¹⁰ H.Ə. Əliyev, *Müstəqilliyimiz əbədidir*, <https://anl.az/el/emb/>, 2003.
- ¹¹ F. Quliyev, *Post-sovet məkanında neft, siyasət və sosial təbəqələşmə: Azərbaycan*, <http://ebooks.adu.edu.az/>, 2008.
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- ¹⁴ Azərbaycan Respublikası Dövlət Statistika Komitəsi “1993-2003-cü illərdə sosial-iqtisadi göstəricilər”, 2005. www.stat.gov.az, <https://www.stat.gov.az/>.

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