

INSIGHTS INTO THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL STATUS AND ITS FORMATION

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Abstract. Social status, a multifaceted construct that encompasses economic, cultural, and symbolic dimensions, plays a crucial role in shaping individual identities and social interactions. The term "social status" describes a person's position in a group or community. By analyzing a group based on the social status of its members, the intra-group dynamics can be better understood.

Key words: social standing, social stratification, social mobility, societal values, economic circumstances, cultural influences, status anxiety, language use, linguistic behavior.

Аннотация. Социальный статус, многогранная конструкция, охватывающая экономические, культурные и символические измерения, играет решающую роль в формировании индивидуальной идентичности и социальных взаимодействий. Термин «социальный статус» описывает положение человека в группе или сообществе. Анализируя группу на основе социального статуса ее членов, можно лучше понять внутригрупповую динамику.

Ключевые слова: социальное положение, социальная стратификация, социальная мобильность, общественные ценности, экономические обстоятельства, культурные влияния, тревожность по поводу статуса, использование языка, языковое поведение.

Social status has an impact on all facets of life and events in various civilizations, including religious, political, and professional ones. The concept of social standing pertains to how others view an individual's social status and how it affects their interactions with one other. Numerous scientists developed various theories of social stratification and fervently supported social rank. This paper explores the various factors contributing to the formation of social status, including wealth, education, occupation, and social networks. It examines how these elements interact to create hierarchies within communities and influence access to resources and opportunities. Additionally, the impact of social media on perceptions of status is analyzed, highlighting the ways in which digital platforms can both reinforce and challenge traditional status markers. The implications of social status on mental health, social cohesion, and societal mobility are also discussed, emphasizing the need for a nuanced understanding of how status affects individuals and groups. Ultimately, this study aims to shed light on the complexities of social status in contemporary society, advocating for policies that promote equity and inclusivity while recognizing the inherent value of diverse social identities. Now, studies concerning social status are highlighted chronically.

| Early 20th Century

• Max Weber (1922): Weber presented the idea of social stratification in his book "Economy and Society," highlighting the interaction of party, class, and rank. He maintained

that social standing is influenced by reputation and social dignity in addition to economic considerations.

- David Riesman (1950): In "The Lonely Crowd," Riesman explored how American culture changed from being tradition-directed to being other-directed, emphasizing how social standing shifted from being about individual accomplishment to being more about conformity and social acceptance.

Social stratification is a practical necessity for society, according to Kingsley Davis and Wilbert E. Moore's "Principles of Stratification" (1945), which postulate that various roles in society have differing degrees of importance and prestige.

| 1960s

- Erik Erikson (1963): In "Childhood and Society," Erikson focused on the influence of societal expectations on individual identity and explored how social status influences identity development at various periods of life.

- Pierre Bourdieu (1979): Bourdieu started formulating his views in the 1960s, despite the fact that his groundbreaking work "Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste" was released later. He proposed ideas like habitus and cultural capital, contending that cultural customs and preferences uphold social standing.

| 1970s

- Social Mobility Studies: Research on social mobility and its relationship to social status, especially in regard to the American Dream, has increased within the past ten years. The obstacles to upward mobility were emphasized by scholars such as Gregory Mantsios.

| 1980s

- Robert Putnam (1985): In "Bowling Alone," Putnam explored America's deteriorating social capital and made the case that community engagement and social networks are essential to preserving social standing and unity.

| 1990s

- Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett (2009): Linking economic disparities to social status, their book "The Spirit Level" evidenced that societies with higher income inequality tend to have worse health outcomes and lower levels of trust, even though their research started in the 1990s.

| 2000s

- Thomas Piketty (2014): Piketty examined wealth disparity and its effects on social standing in "Capital in the Twenty-First Century," contending that a new aristocracy brought about by wealth concentration threatens democracy.

- Social Media Studies: In the 2010s, scholars started looking into how social media affects how people perceive their social standing. Research has shown that social standing and self-esteem can be impacted by online interactions, especially for younger generations.

- Research on Status Anxiety: Numerous studies have examined the idea of status anxiety, especially in connection with economic downturns, demonstrating how perceived dangers to one's social standing can impact social behavior and mental health.

| 2020s

- COVID-19 Pandemic Studies: Research arising from the pandemic has focused on the inequalities based on socioeconomic level and how social status impacts access to resources like technology and healthcare.

- Current Research: Researchers are delving deeper into how race, gender, and class interact to form complex layers of social status, along with examining the impact of digital identities in today's society. This exploration offers insights into the evolving concept of social status across various periods, highlighting how shifts in societal values, economic circumstances, and cultural influences shape our understanding of status within a community.

In this part, more details regarding social status are given.

The term of 'social status' will be applied to a typically effective claim to positive or negative privilege with respect to social prestige so far as it rests on one or more of the following bases: (a) mode of living, (b) a formal process of education which may consist in empirical or rational training and the acquisition of the corresponding modes of life, or (c) on the prestige of birth, or of an occupation. The primary practical manifestations of status with respect to social stratification are conubium, commensality, and often monopolistic appropriation of privileged economic opportunities and also prohibition of certain modes of acquisition. Finally, there are conventions or traditions of other types attached to a social status¹.

Stratificatory status may be based on class status directly or related to it in complex ways. It is not, however, determined by this alone. Property and managerial positions are not as such sufficient to lend their holder a certain social status, though they may well lead to its acquisition. Similarly, poverty is not as such a disqualification for high social status though again it may influence it.

Conversely, social status may partly or even wholly determine class status, without, however, being identical with it. The class status of an officer, a civil servant, and a student as determined by their income may be widely different while their social status remains the same, because they adhere to the same mode of life in all relevant respects as a result of their common education².

Variationist sociolinguists have had a long-standing interest in the relationship between language and social class, cemented by William Labov's seminal New York City study. Labov's large-scale survey of the pronunciation patterns of residents of the Lower East Side of New York City established that language use correlates with social factors such as social class, age and gender. The sociolinguistic surveys conducted and inspired by Labov were based on the assumption that these social categories to some extent controlled individuals' linguistic behaviour (i.e. language use reflects existing social structure). These studies assigned participants to objective class categories (e.g. 'working-class', 'middle-class') using indices of socioeconomic status³.

Some prioritised occupation, while others used a combined index taking into account factors such as income, housing and educational level, as well as occupation. The speech of the resulting social class groups was typically sampled through extended one-to-one interviews

¹Max Weber "Social Stratification and Class Structure"

²Max Weber: The Theory of Social and Economic Organization

³Coupland, N. 2007. Style: Language Variation and Identity. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

designed to elicit speech styles situated at various points along a continuum of formality, from the speakers' most informal 'casual' style, to their most formal self-conscious speech (the latter elicited through reading set passages and word lists, activities that require maximum attention to speech)⁴.

"This overview has mapped one particular trajectory in the development of class analysis in sociolinguistics. Focusing on language variation, it began with the early view that macro-level class structures determine linguistic behaviour, but then moved onto more recent approaches, which prioritise social practice and speaker agency, and have demonstrated that class meanings can become a resource for micro-level interactional and relational work. This mirrors a more general theoretical shift within sociolinguistics away from structural sociology to social action perspectives. This shift in theoretical orientation further necessitates a shift in methodological orientation, from large-scale surveys and quantitative analyses to local ethnographies and interactional analyses. Neither shift is absolute, however. An adequate analysis of language and social class requires an integrated approach which attends both to the regularities of sociolinguistic structure and to the meanings that are made in local contexts of talk. In Rampton's study, for example, the routinized style-shifting uncovered through quantitative analysis revealed that adolescents with different ethnic backgrounds had been socialised into wider patterns of British class stratification in speech. This was important background information for Rampton's account of the 'class consciousness' expressed through stylised posh and Cockney. The adolescents in Rampton's study were not always subordinated by an oppressive class structure, however. Micro-analysis of specific moments of stylisation revealed that speakers drew upon this structure to create local meanings and identities, and on occasions, confident pupils like Hanif subverted dominant class ideologies (compare also Robert's use of howay to assert authority and leadership)"⁵.

"People are socialised into particular ways of speaking, and they do work with some sense of the wider social structure (which is why variationist research continues to uncover consistent patterns of social and stylistic stratification); but as the work reported, speakers can also be innovative in their language use, creatively reworking class meanings and putting them to use in local contexts"⁶. By fostering a culture that values equity and inclusivity, we can mitigate the negative effects of social stratification and build stronger, more resilient communities. Ultimately, a comprehensive understanding of social status is vital for navigating the complexities of modern life and ensuring that all individuals have the opportunity to thrive.

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⁴Julia Snell "Social class and language" p2

⁵Rampton, B. 2006. *Language in Late Modernity: Interaction in an Urban School*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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