

# philippine studies

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**Social Classes:  
The American Class Structure and  
Social Stratification: A Comparative Analysis of  
Structure and Process**

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*Philippine Studies* vol. 7, no. 4 (1959): 521–523

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Fri June 30 13:30:20 2008

But that is a weakness which stems from a profound conviction of the power which the liturgy has of awakening the hearts of the faithful to the sacred mysteries of their Faith (*Quas Primas*, Pius XI).

VICENTE SAN JUAN

## SOCIAL CLASSES

THE AMERICAN CLASS STRUCTURE. By Joseph A. Kahl. New York: Rinehart and Company, 1957. xviii, 310p. \$4.50.

SOCIAL STRATIFICATION: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF STRUCTURE AND PROCESS. By Bernard Barber. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1957. xix, 540p. \$6.50.

One of the newer fields in sociology is that of social stratification, yet there are fewer with a larger literature. We are fortunate then to have published in the same year two first-class books to help us to assimilate all this data.

Professor Kahl has summarized elegantly as well as handily the burgeoning American research in this field over the past thirty years in the 300 pages of his slim book. The result is a very useful reference tool for sociologists and other social scientists interested in stratification.

The work, primarily intended as a text for advanced courses, organizes the multifarious and somewhat disparate studies in stratification so as to present a clear and orderly account of the findings. The factors which historically have been believed the most important in influencing stratification are isolated, and the attempt is made to show how each influences social class patterns in America.

Unlike Barber, Kahl does not attempt a causal theory of stratification, feeling that theory in the field is still too brittle for the purpose. Nor does he try to integrate stratification into any of the general sociological theories now current. Instead he develops a six-factor organizational scheme of stratification based upon the work of Marx and Max Weber, and then proceeds to locate each important piece of research under that factor which it seems to stress most. The results of each study are presented accurately and are evaluated with careful scholarship, and in addition the research methods used in each case to procure the data are submitted to a judicious scrutiny. The six factors isolated are prestige, occupation, possessions, interactions, class consciousness, and value orientations. An entire chapter is devoted to each of these factors, and a seventh chapter to their interrelations.

The final two chapters discuss the barriers raised to class mobility by ethnic stock and race, and consider the various causes of mobility. In these chapters the writer presents original contributions to stratification theory by qualitatively analyzing the typical values of each of the American social classes, and by his endeavor to show quantitatively the amount of occupational mobility in the United States since 1920 and the importance of the various factors associated with this mobility.

The book is well documented, follows a logical outline, and is equipped with an excellent analytical index. Its selective and critical bibliographical references should endear it to the heart of instructors, and together with Barber's book which is reviewed below, it should provide solid textual materials for courses in social stratification.

In *Social Stratification* Professor Barber's main objective is to supply a theoretical explanation of stratification which will integrate and illuminate the findings of stratification research. The theory he proposes is structural-functional in nature, and appears to be based very largely upon the writings of Davis and Moore, and of Parsons. Sometimes the author appears to lose sight of this objective, and to content himself with merely reporting research findings. At other times he seems to weigh results in the balance with his thumb somewhat on the structural-functional side. Nevertheless, the book is of a generally high caliber, and, like Kahl's, one which every social scientist even tangentially interested in stratification will want to have.

The structural-functional theory of stratification as presented by Barber has many gaps and defects in it, and is certainly at best only a partial explanation of stratification. A particular shortcoming is its tendency to reify society into an entity "enticing" men to work harder to achieve the more important statuses. Another is its tendency to justify the *status quo* on the grounds of functional necessity or utility, thus stressing structure and function at the expense of a more adequate treatment of the roots of change. Nevertheless, we must have partial theories before we can achieve a synthesis which will adequately explain this complex social phenomenon, and in the reviewer's judgment the structural-functional view is the best partial explanation thus far advanced. Barber's very clear and able presentation of this viewpoint will provide critics with the opportunity of separating the wheat from the chaff, and thus lead to further theoretical progress in the matter.

While discussing the nature and functions of stratification in the first chapter, the author takes the position that stratification results from the interaction of differentiation and evaluation. A corollary of this is that any social order of invidiously ranked statuses would be a stratification system, whether considerable permanence were implied or not—a point presently in question.

Succeeding chapters cover the field rather thoroughly. The first three of these, together with the introductory chapter, deal with stratification on a high level of general theory, while subsequent chapters attempt to relate this general theory to "middle range" hypotheses and research, as well as to less theoretically guided concepts and findings.

Both the subjective and the objective aspects of class are considered, with particular attention being paid to ratings, personal associations, style of life, and the symbols of class. Rank indices, class consciousness, and authority are examined rather searchingly, and the reader's attention is called to the fruits of speculation and research upon the interrelations of class position and personality structure. The amount of "drive" for achieving high social status or occupational status is a point of particular interest, and its correlation with social class is diligently considered.

The number of pages assigned to structure and to factors which tend to conserve the current stratification system is an indication of the emphasis of the book. Only 25 pages are devoted to change, whereas the first 477 pages are concerned with structure and function. In the section on change, a historical, case-method approach is used and the author confesses that he knows no way of singling out the factors which seem more important in causing or supporting change. This strikingly emphasizes the inability of the structural-functional approach, at the present stage of its development, to deal theoretically with the problem of change, which is certainly one of the main areas of interest and concern in stratification.

Despite the above criticisms, the reviewer highly recommends these two books as solid contributions to the field of social stratification.

FRANCIS C. MADIGAN

## LITERARY PAPER BACKS

MERMAID DRAMABOOKS. Marlowe. Webster-Tourneur. Congreve. New York: Hill & Wang Inc., 1956.

DRAMABOOKS. George Bernard Shaw, by G. K. Chesterton. Dramatic Method, by Harley Granville-Barker. Shakespeare and the Elizabethans, by Henri Fluchère. New York: Hill & Wang Inc., 1956.

In a conference held at the University of Michigan last year Mr. August Heckscher, director of the Twentieth Century Fund, reporting on the effect of the paperback book on the reading habits of the American reading public, concluded that "it has been found that cheap novels