
Presentation at EUSW:s SUMMER SCHOOL,
Dornbirn July 2007
Theme: Social Class Diversity

-
- Social class – definition
 - A classical definition of classes
 - Differences within the classes
 - Effects of a class oriented society
 - Equality and citizenship
 - Poverty
 - Exclusion

Social Class

- Social class refers to a hierarchical distinctions between groups or individuals in society
- This exist in all societies, I guess, but what means by class varies from one society to another
- Some social classes, with richness and power, is seen as the elite in society
- On the other hand groups with less power and less richness can be seen as less worthful

- Do you agree? Are there a social stratification in your country?

A classical definition

- The upper class
- The middle class
- The working class
- In USA they divide it into:
 - "The rich", "the middle class", "the poor"
- Does this classification exist in your country? (more or less) Is there another classification?

Six distinct social classes (USA)

Ref: Dennis Gilbert, William Thompson, Joseph Hickey in

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_class_in_the_United_States

- Upper class - The rich and powerful

- Upper middle class - highly educated and well-paid professionals
- Lower middle class - semi professionals

- Working class - clerical and blue collar employess, routinized work

- Lower class
 - a) working poor
 - b) underclass (excluded?)

Effects of a class oriented society

- The welfare state was created to make life for the people more secure, safe and equal. The older class society couldn't "match" the new industrialized society.
- The welfare states were developed during 1900, mostly after 2:nd world war.
- The former class – societies benefitted the rich people, people in power. From a gender perspective the man was in favour.
- A class society creates an unbalance between people

Equality and citizenship

- Important aims for the welfare states was to create:
 - equality between people
 - everyone belonged to the society by being a citizen
 - but the welfare state also should provide strong and good workforce to the industries

Poverty and exclusion in a changing Europe

- To remember, the absolute poverty in the world is lowering, the gap between rich and poor might be widening
- Equality can be measured by Gini-coefficient
- Who are the poor people in Europe? And particular groups at risk?
- immigrants? Homeless? Who are the homeless? Disabled people?
- What do we know about children in poverty