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Social Class on TV

There are different social classes in America based on lifestyle, wealth and opportunities. Some people believe that the social class system is divided into three **groups** which include poor, middle, and upper class. However, many sociologists divide the American **society** into five groups, these being the upper, upper-middle, middle, working and lower class. This division is made on a **critical theory** based on **social facts** which shape the **social structure** based on the role **of ideology** and **capitalism**. Due to capitalism, the division of society happened in which ideology play an important role. As Marx discussed in his theory that people with fewer opportunities remain unable to recognize their strength and therefore, accepted the society shaped by the people who **achieved status** through production and profit. This division of social class can be observed in T.V shows where each class is presented uniquely. The main purpose of the paper is to analyze how TV shows portray different social classes. With the advancement in technology and the introduction of television, internet and other non-verbal communication media, sociological imagination and mediated interaction have shown a dramatic change in the sociology and life of people. People visualize the social structures they see in TV shows and news.

**Structural functionalism** depicts social structure through **macro**-level orientation and television shows use this **sociology** term to distinguish class with the help of customs, norms, dressing, lifestyle, and traditions. One such TV show is “Billions” produced by Brian Koppelman, David Levien, and Andrew Ross Sorkin. In this TV show, the upper class is portrayed through a blue-collar job. The lead actors acquired a high position in the well-known industry. Their social class can be identified through their high profile dressing, education and knowledge level. In most of the TV shows, the upper class is portrayed as well-educated, extremely wealthy, arrogant, privileged, sophisticated and extremely wealthy and in this show, same elements were used but a unique thing that has been discussed is the legal war between two well-established persons. The name of show “Billions” itself indicates the upper class where people instead of fighting and struggling for basic necessities are involved in activities related to Treasury bond auction market manipulation conduct. The father and wife of the lead actor are also portrayed as powerful and rich people. The main aim of the capitalists is to increase their wealth and profit through **alienation** and by playing at the **backstage**. In this serial also, a character Bobby is portrayed as a good person in front of the whole world but from inside he was cruel and greedy. His gesture helped him to hide his real face from society which resulted in fake impression management. This TV show indicates that the upper class maintains their **ascribed status** through the power and **social construction of reality** which is accepted by the middle and lower class(*Billions*).

Another social class that is middle class also known as the working class. They are known as working-class because they play a vital role in the process of production and for economic growth by providing their services. This image can be observed in the TV show “Roseanne” in which the middle class is presented through the story revolving around the Conner family. The TV show is famous for portraying the realistic image of the middle class. The TV show portrayed that the family had limited income in which they had to fulfill their necessities and other wants. Besides job and opportunities, the location of the house and its size also depict the wealth and access of the family to the sources. The TV shows indicated that middle-class work for their basic necessities. They acquire education, quality food, shelter, and other **consumptions** by spending hours working. The TV show also portrayed the social side of the family where they sit together happily and pass jokes to each other. They seem satisfied with their lifestyle most of the time but sometimes their wishes make them worry or sad. This TV show tells the exact image of the middle or working-class living in America(Bromberg).

Game of Thrones is another famous drama in contemporary time that got popularity worldwide. This drama portrayed the war to claim the throne. This is the fictional story but it depicts the issues involved in the upper class. Through this serial, some real facts can be concluded that the satisfaction and happiness of the person cannot depend on the status or social class. People whether from the upper class, middle class or lower class have their own certain problems. For instance, in the game of throne portrayed the brotherhood protecting the kingdom against the violent individuals and mythical creations of the north. The episode that I have observed showed the lifestyle of the royal family. They acquire all the necessities and had a luxurious lifestyle with numbers of poor people working for them. The show indicates the **exchange relationship** and **unanticipated consequences** between poor and royals, also between two powerful groups. The fictional drama depicts the real elements of social class like exploitation, false consciousness, feminist theory, and function of the society through a well-scripted story(*Game of Thrones: HBO’s “A Song of Ice and Fire” TV Series*).

Through the analysis of three TV shows, it is understood how upper class, middle class, and lower class behave in society. Factors like wants, mass culture, class consciousness, education, income, inherited wealth change their status and living standard in society. Each class has its own priority as well as the conflict that they try to sort out to improve their living standards and lifestyle.

**Work Cited**

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