

CLASS STRUCTURE HANDOUT

Social Class System Models (source: Wikipedia-“social class”)

Read the following different types of class systems, then answer the questions.

1. Aztec - Aztec society traditionally was divided into classes.

The highest class were the pīpiltin or nobility. Originally this status was not hereditary, although the sons of pillis had access to better resources and education, so it was easier for them to become pillis. Later the class system took on hereditary aspects.

The second class were the mācehualtin (people), originally peasants. Eduardo Noguera estimates that in later stages only 20% of the population was dedicated to agriculture and food production. The other 80% of society were warriors, artisans and traders.

Slaves or tlacotin also constituted an important class. Aztecs could become slaves because of debts, as a criminal punishment or as war captives. A slave could have possessions and even own other slaves.

Traveling merchants called pochtecah were a small, but important class as they not only facilitated commerce, but also communicated vital information across the empire and beyond its borders. They were often employed as spies.

2. Roman Class Structure

Highest: Senatorial (political - made up of mostly nobility; consuls and senators by birth)
 Equestrian (economical - if you were wealthy enough to be an equite)

Lower Classes: Commons (plebs/vulgus - freeborn Roman citizens)
 Latins (Latini - freeborn citizens of Italy)
 Foreigners (peregrini - all freeborn people who lived in Roman territories)
 Freedpeople (liberti or libertini - people who were slaves but bought their freedom)
 Slaves (servi - chattel slavery that you are born into or sold into through war or piracy)

3. Renaissance Europe

The Mantegna Tarocchi, sets of cards made as an educational aid in Ferrara in the late 15th century, used the following hierarchy for the "Conditions of Man", largely ignoring the rural population:

- 1 Beggar
- 2 Servant (Fameio)
- 3 Craftsman (Artixan)
- 4 Merchant (Merchadante) - presumably living mostly off income as a landlord
- 5 Gentleman (Zintilomo)
- 6 Knight (Chavalier)
- 7 Doge (Doxe)- ie a local ruler
- 8 King (Re)
- 9 Emperor (Imperator)
- 10 Pope (Papa)

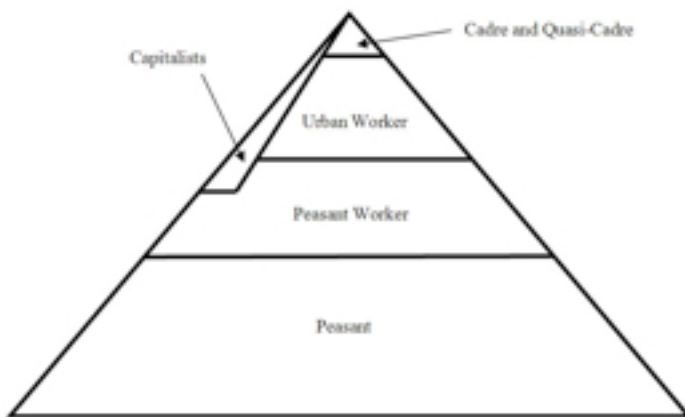
4. Marx's theory

Jon Elster's explanation of Marx's schema of classes.

Social mode of production	Ruling classes	other classes	example society
a. Primitive communism	No classes		Many pre-agricultural societies
b. Asiatic mode of production	Bureaucrats or theocrats	[unnamed class]	Archaic Egyptian society
c. Slave societies	Patricians	Plebeians, freemen, slaves	Ancient Greece
d. Feudal societies	Lords	guild masters, journeymen, serfs	12th century Western Europe
e. Capitalist societies	Industrial and financial capitalists, landlords	the petty bourgeois, the peasantry, wage laborers	19th century England

5. Chinese

Li Yi Model of the Chinese Social Stratification, 2005



6. America (William Lloyd Warner's early model: 1949)

Based on social anthropology, Warner divided Americans into three classes (upper, middle, and lower), then further subdivided each of these into an "upper" and "lower" segment, with the following postulates:

- **Upper-upper class.** "Old money." People who have been born into and raised with wealth; mostly consists of old "noble" or prestigious families (e.g., Earl of Shrewsbury, Vanderbilt, Rockefeller).
- **Lower-upper class.** "New money." Individuals who have become rich within their own lifetimes (e.g., entrepreneurs, movie stars, top athletes, as well as some prominent professionals).
- **Upper-middle class.** Professionals with a college education, and more often with postgraduate degrees like MBAs, Ph.D.s, MDs, JDs, MSs, etc. (e.g., doctors, dentists, lawyers, bankers, corporate executives, head teachers, university professors, scientists, pharmacists, airline pilots, ship captains, actuaries, high level civil servants, politicians, and military officers, architects, artists, writers, poets, and musicians).
- **Lower-middle class.** Lower-paid white collar workers, but not manual laborers. Often hold Associates or Bachelor degrees. (e.g., police officers, fire fighters, primary and high school teachers, engineers, accountants, nurses, municipal office workers and low to mid-level civil servants, sales representatives, non-management office workers, clergy, technicians, small business owners).
- **Upper-lower class.** Blue-collar workers and manual laborers. Also known as the "working class."
- **Lower-lower class.** The homeless and permanently unemployed, as well as the "working poor."