MULTI-DIMENSIONAL THEORY OF STRATIFICATION

(MAX WEBER)
INTRODUCTION

- WEBER GAVE THREE DIMENSIONAL MODEL OF STRATIFICATION.
- HE USED CLASS, STATUS AND PARTY TO REPRESENT SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DIMENSION OF STRATIFICATION EXISTING IN SOCIETY.
CLASS, STATUS AND PARTY ARE A KIND OF INTEREST GROUPS THAT CAN FIGHT AMONG THEMSELVES AND AGAINST EACH OTHER.
LIKE MARX, WEBER SEE CLASS IN ECONOMIC TERMS.

HE ARGUES THAT CLASSES DEVELOP IN MARKET ECONOMIES IN WHICH INDIVIDUALS COMPETE FOR ECONOMIC GAINS.

WEBER DEFINES CLASS AS A GROUP OF INDIVIDUALS WHO SHARE A SIMILAR POSITION IN A MARKET ECONOMY AND BY VIRTUE OF THE FACT RECEIVE SIMILAR ECONOMIC REWARDS.
- IN WEBERS TERMINOLOGY, A PERSON'S CLASS SITUATION IS BASICALLY HIS "MARKET SITUATION."
- THOSE WHO SHARE A SIMILAR CLASS SITUATION ALSO SHARE SIMILAR LIFE CHANCES.
WEBER DISTINGUISHED THE FOLLOWING CLASS
GROUPINGS IN CAPITALIST SOCIETY.

1) THE PROPERTIED UPPER CLASS.
2) the propertyless white collar workers.
3) The petty bourgeoisie
4) The manual working class
Weber see a diversification of classes and an expansion of the white collar middle class rather than a polarization.

He also points out that factors other than the ownership or non ownership of property are significant in formation of class.
STATUS GROUP

- A STATUS GROUP IS MADE UP OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE AWARDED A SIMILAR AMOUNT OF SOCIAL HONOUR AND THEREFORE SHARE THE SAME STATUS SITUATION.
• CLASS REFERS TO THE UNEQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF ECONOMIC REWARDS.

  -WHEREAS-

• STATUS REFER TO THE UNEQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF SOCIAL HONOUR.
THOSE WHO SHARE THE SAME CLASS SITUATION WILL NOT NECESSARILY BELONG TO THE SAME STATUS GROUP.
WEBER DEFINE “PARTIES” AS GROUPS WHICH ARE SPECIFICALLY CONCERNED WITH INFLUENCING POLICIES AND MAKING DECISIONS IN THE INTERESTS OF THEIR MEMBERSHIP.

IN WEBER’S WORDS, PARTIES ARE CONCERNED WITH THE ACQUISITION OF SOCIAL “POWER.”
PARTIES MAY REPRESENT INTERESTS DETERMINED THROUGH “CLASS SITUATION” OR “STATUS SITUATION”

IN MOST CASES THEY ARE PARTLY CLASS PARTIES AND PARTLY STATUS PARTIES BUT SOMETIMES THEY ARE NEITHER.
TYPES OF PARTY

- Weber identifies two different types of party:
  - 1) Parties of patronage
  - 2) Parties of principles
Weber analysis of class, status and party suggests that no single theory can pinpoint and explain their relationship. The interplay of class, status & party in the formation of social groups is complex and variables must be examined in particular societies during particular time periods.
CRITICISM

- Weber’s typology of class is non-dynamic and too abstract.
- Weber declares that economic order and status groups as empirically distinct, on other hand he says they are very often correlated.
CONCLUSION

- WEBER’S THEORY IS A VAST IMPROVEMENT OVER MARX’S THEORY BECAUSE IT ADDS AND SUBTLETY TO THE UNIDIMENSIONALITY OF MARX’S ECONOMIC DETERMINISM.
- WEBER’S THEORY INCLUDES A VARIETY OF DIFFERENT MANIFESTATIONS OF STRATIFICATION UNDER ONE ROOF.