Struggles of Inequality in the Neoliberal World

By Cheryl Sanders
What is Social Inequality?

The distribution of valuable material and symbolic resources, status and power that are decisive for opportunities and actual life chances

-Faist and Bilecen (2014)
Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002)

- Emphasized centrality of evaluations of every day life.
- Social Constructivist - sees ethics as a social agreement
  - Beyond standards of individuals
  - Not preferences but strong evaluations
Terminology

- **Class Analysis**: to obtain a better understanding to the effects of class-based inequalities and the forms of exploitation enabling the inequalities to be reproduced or sustained.

- **Habitus**: Unconscious sense of the social world created through upbringing. Everything we think and do.

- **Field**: Setting that is organized around specific stakes that all participants pursue.

- **Symbolic Power**: A kind of power reinforced by authority. The stakes that are pursued within a field.
What is Class?

- Class is an effect that manifests through the operation of many fields.
- Two Meanings (Rancière 1999:83)
  - Governmental Sense
  - An Operator of conflict
- Bourdieu argues class to be a relational concept and social classes only emerge through struggles.
  - The struggle over rules and resources
    - Gender
    - Race
    - Television
    - Cars
Beverly Skeggs
- Pushes Bourdieu’s framework limits using social space approach
- “Gentrify people”- to make behaviors more congruent with Neoliberal Principles
- Academia success is determined by the financial investors
  - Women are the minority in the science enterprise (Karatas-özkan and Chell)
- Role models and mentor figures are significant for women
- Age discrimination of securing new jobs, specifically women’s bodies viewed as less attractive as they age.
Race

• Color-blind racial discourses that influence neoliberal urban redevelopment policies and practices.
  • **Case Study**: Chester, Pennsylvania, population: 36,000
    • Urban redevelopment policies rarely deliver!
    • Sociospatial inequality
    • Poor communities = Investment Incentives
The Car

- U.S is the most **car dependent** nation in the world
  - Symbolic of success
- Changing the car system is the key to solving problems
  - Climate change
  - Urban sprawl
  - Public health problems represented by crashes
- Creates **compulsory consumption**
- **Privatized Expense**
  - Retail
    - Loan financing
    - Parking costs
  - Oil Companies
    - Gasoline

- **High Risk Technology**
  - Repair
    - Sealed units

- **Government access**
  - Fees, taxes, fines
    - Creates second class status
  - State vehicle inspections
  - Car loan companies
Television

An industry that edits and organizes perception offering visions of the world, classified, portioned and divided

-Bourdieu 2011:22

- Neoliberal Media Culture-Class inequalities are made to appear as a consequence of an individual’s choice

- Benefit Streets, most popular and profitable program in Britain in 2014
Bibliography

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