

COMMUNITY, SOCIAL CLASS, AND POVERTY

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Types of community

- mechanical solidarity = social cohesion based on similarity
 - organic solidarity = social cohesion based on interdependence
- (Emile Durkheim)

Opportunities at the community level:

- social identity
- social cohesion
- social support

Risks at the community level:

- oppression (lack of economic and political opportunity)
- stereotyping
- marginality

Social pathology" affected by community stress (Garbarino):

- infant mortality/morbidity
- teenage pregnancy
- juvenile delinquency
- child maltreatment

Individualistic Explanations of Poverty

1. Genetic Inferiority
2. Psychological Problems - Expectancy Model
3. Human Capital

Cultural Explanations of Poverty



1. Culture of Poverty
2. Cultural Deprivation

Structural factors that contribute to poverty (Beeghley, 1983):

1. The way in which the correlates of poverty create a vicious circle that often traps the poor and prevents them from changing their situation.
2. The way the class system reproduces itself over time.
3. The organization of the economy.
4. The continuation of institutionalized discrimination against African-Americans and women.
5. The increasing isolation of the ghetto. (Wilson)

William Ryan's Formula for Blaming the Victim:

1. Identify a social problem.
2. Study those who have the problem and figure out the ways in which they are different from the dominant culture.
3. Define the differences as the cause of the social problem itself.
4. Assign a government bureaucrat to invent a humanitarian action program to correct the differences.

Continuum & Categorical

CONTINUUM MODEL OF SOCIAL CLASS:

- People are born with equal opportunity -- educational attainment determines class outcome.

CATEGORICAL MODEL OF SOCIAL CLASS:

- People are born into a certain class, which determines their educational attainment and (by and large) keeps them in that class.

SOCIAL WORK IMPLICATIONS:

1. Pay attention to impact of economic stress, powerlessness, and alienation in communities.
2. Empower clients, advocate for institutional change.
3. Target services to the needs of specific populations and specific communities.
4. Concrete services may be needed rather than abstract "insight".