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Hidden Rules of Class

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A Framework for Understanding Poverty

Using the work of:

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Poverty is

- **Poverty** “is the extension to which an individual does without resources”
- “Poverty is first and foremost a lack of resources and opportunities”.
- The tyranny of the moment.
- Being poor have little to do with intelligence; it is about survival.
- Poverty is linked to limited relationships with human and social capital in the community.



Hidden rules among classes:

“Unspoken clues and habits of a group”.

The worst mistake is to assume that the hidden rules have been given to everyone

People that come from different economic classes believe that the same rules apply to everyone



DRIVING FORCES

POVERTY

Survival,
relationships,
entertainment

MIDDLE CLASS

Work, achievement

WEALTH

Financial, political, social
connections



TIME

POVERTY

Present most important

**Decisions made for the moment
based on feelings or survival**

MIDDLE CLASS

Future most important

**Decisions made against future
ramifications**

WEALTH

**Traditions and history most
important**

**Decisions made partially on basis
of tradition/decorum**

MONEY



POVERTY

To be used, spent

MIDDLE CLASS

To be managed

WEALTH

To be conserved, invested

POSSESSIONS

POVERTY

People



MIDDLE CLASS

Things

WEALTH

One-of-a-kind objects, legacies,
pedigrees



SOCIAL EMPHASIS

POVERTY

**Social inclusion of people
he/she likes**

MIDDLE CLASS

**Emphasis is on self-governance
and self-sufficiency**

WEALTH

**Emphasis is on social
exclusion**



FOOD

POVERTY

**Key question:
Did you have enough?
Quantity important**

MIDDLE CLASS

**Key question:
Did you like it?
Quality important**

WEALTH

**Key question:
Was it presented well?
Presentation important**



DESTINY

POVERTY

Believes in fate

Cannot do much to mitigate chance

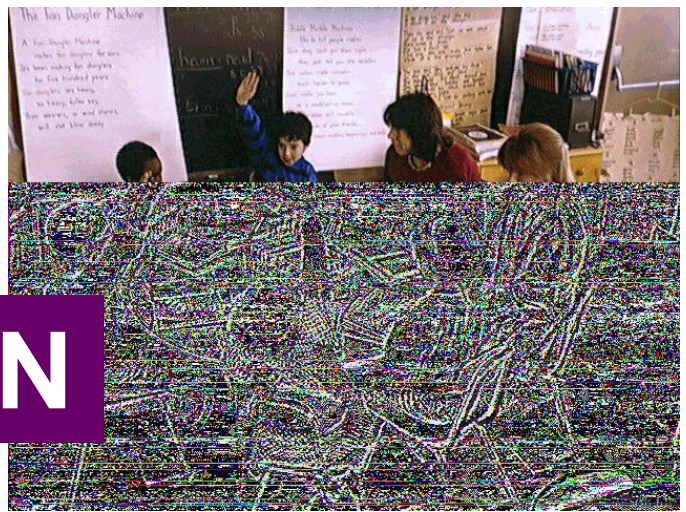
MIDDLE CLASS

Believes in choice

Can change future with good choices now

WEALTH

Noblesse oblige



EDUCATION

POVERTY

Valued and revered as
abstract but not as reality

MIDDLE CLASS

Crucial for climbing success
ladder and making money

WEALTH

Necessary tradition for
making and maintaining
connections



WORLD VIEW

POVERTY

**Sees world in terms of
local setting**

MIDDLE CLASS

**Sees world in terms of
national setting**

WEALTH

**Sees world in terms
of international view**

HUMOR



POVERTY

About people and sex

MIDDLE CLASS

About situations

WEALTH

About social *faux pas*

FAMILY STRUCTURE



POVERTY

Tends to be matriarchal

MIDDLE CLASS

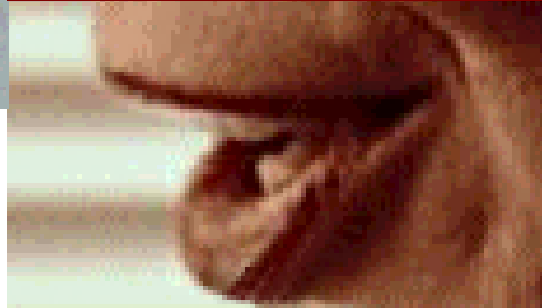
Tends to be patriarchal

WEALTH

Depends on who has the money



LANGUAGE



POVERTY

Casual register

Language is about survival

MIDDLE CLASS

Formal register

Language is about negotiation

WEALTH

Formal register

Language is about networking



POWER

POVERTY

Power linked to personal respect
Ability to fight
Can't stop bad things from happening

MIDDLE CLASS

Power/respect separated
Responds to position
Power in information and institutions

WEALTH

Power in expertise, connections
Power in stability
Influences policy and direction

Getting Out of Poverty

- Education and relationships help one move out of poverty
- There are four basic things that have facilitated people get out of poverty:

- 1. It is too painful**
- 2. Vision or goal**
- 3. A key relationship**
- 4. Special talent or skills**

Thoughts and Ideas