

The Economics of Social Stratification in Premodern Societies

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Abstract

We present a microeconomic model of social stratification, which includes an endogenous fertility component. In the model, egalitarian and stratified societies coexist. The latter are divided into 2 hereditary classes: a warrior elite and a productive class. The model entails that the extra cost warriors must incur to train and equip their children for war determines the relative sizes of both classes and the degree of economic inequality. Higher costs of warrior children imply a greater economic advantage for warriors and a smaller ratio of warriors to producers. These results are consistent with the historical evidence. Finally, we explore conditions under which the social contributions of the warrior elite could discourage a revolution.

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Keywords

- [income inequality](#),
- [military participation ratio](#),

- [social stratification,](#)
- [warfare](#)