

# Post-Dumont Approaches

Introduction to Sociology

# Dumont summarised

- Indological – from text to empirical
- Hierarchy as societal value – Hinduism not a world religion
- Purity and Pollution together in daily lives very important
- Caste not territorial, Individual possible only through **renunciation**
- In Rural India Dominant castes play the king – priest (Brahmin) continues to be important
- With Democracy? Caste become substantialised – play the role of individuals

# Dumont Neglects

- Focussing on texts – he neglects history
- Social division of labour - economic coercion in caste
- Varna-caste confusion
- Land → Status or Status to land?
- Commensality and endogamy – undermines some transgressions..
- Priest power or political power, whose bigger?  
→ all disconnected from economic power?

# Anthropology and Hierarchy

- Knowledge as Power?
- Issue of assumption of the orient → Native as stagnant – where is the native?
- Spatial confinement of natives - central to anthropology about natives
- Genealogy help us move hierarchy out of India
- **Hierarchy in Anthropology as a kind of HEGEMONY**

# Hierarchy as reciprocity?

- Hierarchy underestimates reciprocity – Pure and Impure far from being absolutely separated – They are not like Durkheim's concept of Sacred and Profane
- Idea of Positive and NEGATIVE SACREDNESS → NEGATIVE SACREDNESS – PEOPLE SCARED OF CURSE FROM UNTOUCHABLE AND FROM BRAHMIN
- **Hindu Hierarchy gives Way to Hindu Equality [ Veena Das 71]**

# Equality as Western?

- Postcolonialist scholars doubt the idea that equality is western and hierarchy Indian
- What about Kabir, buddha and others who talked of equality
- Subaltern consciousness does not agree with homohierarchicus (Parth Chaterjee)

# Hierarchy and Difference

- The various levels are always arranged vertically -- But not all systems of stratification are hierarchical Differences - rather than hierarchy are dominant in some systems... Caste –organised horizontally or even separately
- Caste is not just separation of caste but valorization of differences
- Unanimity over the Brahminic hierarchic does not really exist
- Why no conflicts? Conflicts is only amongst equals

# Dumont against Marx?

- Marx understood India in Two Modes
  1. Stagnation of Village Communities
  2. Internal Equilibrium of Indian Society – heterogeneous collection of civil society
- Arun Bose prefers the second one --Indian civil societies interlocked with each other. Helps raise questions about caste and democracy.
- Bose argues for an Indo-Marxian Paradigm which Dumont has helped build
- 1 Work towards Marxist explanation of ethno communities
- 2. Understand HOW and WHAT WILL MAKE AN “INDIVIDUAL POSSIBLE” OTHER THAN RENUNCIATION?

# Mckim Marriot

- Indic Substance was highly particulate
- Sanyasi aside, indian thought never got down to Individual for Dumont, Marriott sees individual as coded bodily

# Caste and the Individual

- Does Caste affect possibilities of Individual?
- Can Individual be Social Identity Free?
- Caste and Individual not be Together? What form?  

- Lets Think Through Marriage..

# Rajput – IIT/PhD – My caste Please.

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KHATRI



# Caste as Difference: Discrete Hierarchy?



# Brahmin – Any North Indian: Does Territory Matter?

BY CASTE

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# Caste and Star Does not Matter – But purity does?

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Mumbai, Maharashtra, India



**Age** : 41  
**Height** : 5ft 3in ( 160cm )  
**Religion** : Hindu, Khatri,  
**Star** : Does not matter  
**Education** : Chartered Accountant,  
**Occupation** : Software Consultant, Private

Profile being handled by Brother Mr. Varma. Divorced/Aned/Scheduled caste Please excuse . Please only who are serious about dis

# The Individual? Caste no Bar..

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**CIVIL  
MARRIAGE**

# Caste changing?

- Religion is on a high – caste withering?
- Modern west as egalitarian?
- How does one explain 10 per cent on inter-caste marriages?
- May be inter-dining not a factor yet in villages but what about cities?
- Caste occupations not persistent anymore?
- Food – 70 per cent non-vegetarians: What is the fuss about purity?

## Next Three Lecture

- Civil Society? What is Civil Society? How does caste affect Civil Society?
- State: What is State? Is State caste-free?
- Caste, Markets and Inequality