Fractured Identities: Changing Patterns of Inequality
by Harriet Bradley

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Social inequalities are a main focus of the sociological debate. In the UK in particular, there is a profound awareness of the problem, with newspapers publishing detailed statistics and reports conveying rates of inequality. *Fractured Identities* by Harriett Bradley perfectly fits into this ongoing debate. This second edition brings a renewed approach to the topic without underestimating the important contributions of the past decades. This duality is well expressed by the title of the book. The focus of the study, as revealed by the subtitle, is the shifting patterns of inequality that are subject to constant change in our current society. The main title, on the other hand, shows the peculiar approach proposed by the scholar, focused on processes of identity fragmentation as a result of these social changes. The structure of the book is linear and coherent. Each chapter has its own topic which is always analysed with plenty of reference to the classics of sociology and is complemented by the author's view, adding some final thinking points.

In the preface to the second edition, the author explains the differences between the two editions; recalling the theoretical framework of the previous work and what has since changed in literature and in society. Though the examples are mostly referring to the UK, case studies from the US and other countries are also mentioned. Due to the results of policies centring on austerity, but also of the current migrations and multiculturalism, Bradley finds it necessary to include more types of social division to the four already outlined in the previous edition. Disability, sexuality and religion are added in an extra chapter to the standard kinds of social division discussed in the 1996 edition: class, gender, ethnicity and age (p. 3). This brief outline effectively succeeds in making the reader aware of the aims of the work and outlines the adopted approach.

The introduction discusses this approach more in depth and provides a brief excursus on the main studies of inequality given by the leading streams of sociological theorists during the past decades. This overview begins with Marx and passes through the currently popular theories by

Bourdieu and Giddens. Thus the chapter offers a valuable summary of the main debate of the past decades between structuralism and post-modernism. The author successfully manages to simplify some complex concepts, making them available for students at their first encounter with sociological theories. The final paragraph presents the framework used in this work, a 'both/and' approach, which will be exemplified in the rest of the book (pp. 18-20).

Chapter 2 provides the first application of these concepts to a case study. It presents facts and figures related to the recent history in the UK, in particular to the recession recorded in 2007. The approach proposed by Bradley is well supported by this case study. The author focuses on the concept of identity proposing the use of dynamics of intersectionality. Through this approach, Bradley makes use of notions of polarization and fragmentation, in her 'both/and' approach already anticipated in the introduction (pp. 39-41).

After having provided a clear notion of what inequality is, how it has been dealt with in the previous decades and what the approach of this publication is, the author then turns to a presentation of society as a whole and of its interpretations in the sociological debate. Chapter 3 explores in more detail how sociologists have categorized industrial societies. Starting from the first concepts of capitalism, the author introduces theories of the 'new capitalism' and modernity, concluding with approaches of post-industrialism and post-modernity. Once more, Bradley proves capable of summarizing in an effective way decades of sociological studies and presenting them in an easy and captivating way.

The main body of the book is represented by Chapters 4-8. In the first four, Bradley deals with the main forms of social differentiation already analysed in the previous edition. Class, gender, race and ethnicity, and age are all presented with reasonable detail. Each chapter describes the main trends in the analysis of the specific category, followed by the author's interpretation of them in light of her theory of intersecting dynamics. For this reason, every chapter includes an evaluation of the analysed inequality in relation to the other three. Moreover, each topic is followed by a list of further readings, including the most recent publications on the theme, should the reader wish to deepen their knowledge with some useful references. For the use of this stable and convincing structure, we have to agree with the author that undergraduate students freshly approaching these sociological themes can also use each chapter independently (p. 17).

Chapter 8 relies on the same structure but explains in a more concise way the three additional sources of inequalities added to this new edition: disability, sexual orientation and religious affiliation. These are related to recent events in the UK again with references to established literature, followed by a list of recommended readings.

Finally, the concluding chapter suggests the possible approaches to the inequalities raised by this discussion. The author explains how the 'both/and' approach theorized in the introduction and applied throughout the book is the best fit, in her opinion, to the contemporary discussion (p. 272).

To sum up, Bradley's new edition of *Fractured Identities* is a solid work that provides the reader with an updated account on the sociological work about inequalities. At the same time, it offers a new interesting framework that values both the latest approaches and traditional class analysis, merging fracturing and polarizing. The captivating writing style makes it an engaging read that will definitely appeal to both students as well as established scholars.