CHAPTER II
THEORITICAL REVIEWS

2.1 Concepts and Theories of Stratification

It is in *The Social Science Encyclopedia* (2000: 1058) that explains social stratification refers to vertically shaped levels of human being, as if the earth lied on the top of the soil and on the bottom of the others. If we talk about social stratification we tend to the unequal position of each individual in the society. The ‘term’ sometimes widely reflects to the inferiority, eventhough it may be very useful if we only limit it into a particular group or classes.

Stratification has been a constant theme in moral, political, philosophical writing though the ages. Millions of words have been written to denounce inequalities in wealth and power. Millions have also been written to justify these inequalities. From the point of view of modern sociology, this is an irresolvable conflict based on two stubborn facts. First, stratification has many undesirable consequences. People at the bottom of stratification system often suffer greatly, both physically and emotionally. Second, some degree of stratification seems to be an unavoidable feature of social structure.

At this point, the writer of this thesis examines the conflict theories and the functionalist theories of stratification.

2.1.1 Conflict Theories of Stratification

According to conflict theory, people exploit their power to secure their rewards. Persons, high in the stratification system, will take advantage of their position to exploit others. (source: the book of Social Stratification and Inequality).
Very briefly, the conflicts theorists seeks to explain social stratification in terms of a struggle for power. Karl Marx (1997: 12), for example, regarded social classes as an essential feature of social evolution. He believed that the class which owns the means of production is able to keep the other classes in a subordinate position, and retain for itself any surplus that is produced. Economics power gives people the wherewithal to exercise political control and to form a ruling class which has a vested interest in maintaining its own superiors position. Marx believed that this is achieved by the ability of the dominant class to ensure that all the major social institutions, marriage, education, the political system, religion and so on-uphold and serve its own purposes.

Marx (1997: 13) aimed to explain social change and produced a theory of history. He believed that the answer lay in conflicts among social classes. The whole of human history, Marx and Engels wrote in *The Communist Manifesto* in (1848: 20), has been ‘the history of class struggles'. These struggles are the engines that pull societies into new forms, and the history of human societies is a history of one ruling class being overthrown by a new one.

Marx defined these two classes in term of their different relationship to the means of production. The means of production are everything besides human labor that goes into producing wealth. Chief among these are land (on which crops grow, cattle feed, and buildings stands), machines and tools and investment capital. One class, the bourgeoisie, owns these means of production. The other class, according to Marx, is everyone who does not own such means and therefore must sell his or her labor to the bourgeoisie. Marx called this class proletariat, employing the name used by the Romans to identify the poor. These terms essentially refer to owners (or employers) and workers (or employees). Marx realized that all capitalist societies in
his time had many people who did not fit into his two-class scheme, but he believed
that these groups would not significantly affect history. (source: the book of Social
Stratification and Inequality).

One such group was the middle class, including small merchants and self-
employed professionals, such as doctors and lawyers. Marx believed that as the
capitalist system evolved, the middle class would eventually be crushed and forced
into the proletariat. He also dismissed a large number of people who were marginal to
the economy-vagrants, migrant workers, beggars, criminals, gypsies, and the like. He
classified such persons as members of the Lumpenproletariat (literally the `ragamuffin
proletariat'). Such people had so little social purpose and self-respect. Marx believed
that they would have no effect on the impending revolutionary struggle. Finally, he
excluded that stratification is the social conflict that result social jealousy because it
should happen for there is no standard of living for every member of society. It is
impossible to have equal domination for everyone has different capacity to trace his or
her social recognition. It is only social feeling of that class difference that makesw
such class difference. So presence of gap that there has been high class people lower
class people and middle class people such as difference that consciously felt in social
phenomenon is better known as social stratification.

2.1.2 The Functionalist Theory of Stratification

The modern functionalist view of stratification is most closely identified with
the work of Kingsley Davis and Wilber E. Moore (1945, 1953: 27). The key to their
functionalist theory of stratification is in seeing society as a system of roles or
positions. Inequality or stratification exists in societies because it is built into these
roles and into the problem of filling them adequately. (Source: the book of Social
Davis and Moore began by arguing that positions in society differ in the degree to which they are functionally important. That is, poor performance in some roles is more damaging to the society than is poor performance in some other positions. For example, while it is true that a society engaged in a war requires both soldiers and generals, a general is in a position to make more devastating errors than is any given soldier. Remember that for every famous general who won a battle that seemed unwinnable there was a general on the other side who lost a battle that seemed unlovable.

This is because these positions require qualities that are naturally in short supply or that require a considerable preliminary investment in time, training, and effort.

Therefore, stratification exists because the positions in the society differ in their importance to the system and because it is necessary to ensure that competent people fill the most important positions.