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Response Paper

Ethnography that I have selected for this essay is the *Doormen* by Peter Bearman. The *Doormen* is one of the most fascinating books that I have come across. It reveals how the doormen tend to know more than the tenants. The most eminent thing is that the doormen and the tenants are very distant when it comes to social relationship. The most ironical thing about their relationship in New York is the fact that the doormen tend to know more about the tenants while the tenants know almost nothing about the doormen. Peter Bearman tries to explain how the two social groups tend to associate with each other despite their different social statuses. Peter Bearman developed an interest in studying the relationship between the two groups. He designed an in-depth study. He conducted a series of interviews with the doormen and then combined all surveys and observations to explain better the relationships that exist between the doormen and the tenants. After his research, he reveals the effects of the social talk that exists between the two groups. One of the remarkable views that exists among the doormen is the perception that all tenants are equal. In particular, they feel that all tenants deserve equal treatment. Many people may not see the significance of the study of the doormen. On the other hand, it is very important to understand this unique relationship that exists between the doormen and the tenants. Therefore, this paper will focus on the relationship that exists between them and the relevance of the book to our knowledge on inequality.



Background



One of the fascinating factors is that the author attributes his book to the literature that focuses on the daily lives. The author shows a good mastery of ethnography. He challenges old techniques that were used for studying heterodox populations. Ethnographic technique was widely used in the study of groups such as street junkies. Bearman demonstrates his good mastery of ethnographic technique by studying a segregated group that does not have any significant previous sociological analysis. He uses the observation technique with other qualitative methods to shed light on the relationship between the doormen and the tenants. He also succeeded in highlighting the elements of social life that would otherwise be invisible if he had not used such technique. The *Doormen* is a very important novel that teaches us more about inequality. The book reveals that equality is not strong in the society where rich people perpetuate inequality because they do not want to interact with other social classes.

Doormen exhibit their professionalism by treating every tenant equally. Given example shows that even though inequality has been a prevailing issue in the US, some social groups still embrace equality. Doormen demonstrate how people can embrace professionalism by adopting equality and treating all individuals as equals. On the other hand, the *Doormen* clearly indicate that both rich and poor can coexist and live in peace without discrimination.



Response



In this ethnography, Peter Bearman raises the issue of inequality. At first, the issue of racial discrimination or profiling is very eminent. It is interesting that doormen tend to argue that they are not racists, but they are actually the ones who perpetuate racial discrimination. Although doormen claim to pursue equality, the way they treat minorities does not truly support such statement. However, the actions of doormen can be explained only by the fact that they have to serve different needs of the tenants. Some tenants have strict visitors' policy while others do not. Racial discrimination becomes eminent when Black visitors have to wait longer than the White visitors, who do not need to be booked. It is very unlikely that Blacks always visit tenants who have strict visitors' policy. On the other hand, people are more likely to assume that there is racial discrimination in instances where Blacks are forced to wait.

The former discussion supports the fact that inequality is very prevalent. On the other hand, it is eminent that doormen tend to use race as one of the key factors for profiling the visitors, who may be a threat to the household. It is unfortunate that doormen tend to pursue discrimination and perceive one group of people to pose a significantly higher security threat than others. Instead of thoroughly checking all visitors, the doormen seem to perpetuate inequality. Therefore, the book portrays a major social problem that exists in the society today.



Inequality can also be seen among the number of doormen. Many people want to become doormen but the chances are very rare. Doormen disclose that knowing the right people is one of the most important things at their jobs. As a result, this has led to over-presentation of some groups and underrepresentation of other social groups. One of the major causes of inequality among African Americans is the fact that these people lack social connections. Therefore, their access to the jobs has become a major factor causing substantial inequality. It is hard to reverse the social disparity that exists in the society against the Blacks. Although employers are expected to offer equal opportunities for all people, it is very unfortunate that they do not indeed.

On the other hand, Peter Bearman reinforces the theme of inequality throughout his book. He reveals that tenants and doormen are from two different social classes. From initial description of the doormen, it is eminent that they belong to a very low social class. However, the most interesting thing is that despite the social distance both social groups are able to coexist with each other. It is amazing doormen still interact with the tenants and learn more about their ways of life. Unfortunately, tenants do not seem to know anything about the doormen because they rarely reveal information about their lives.

Various parts of the book are very interesting to me. One of the best episodes is the doormen working very hard to receive their yearly bonus, because it reveals that in the presence of rewards people can work with greater professionalism. It reminds me of the power of a

reward as a key motivating factor in the workplace. Bearman reveals that the bonus is seen as a sign of tenants' appreciation of the good work done by the doormen. Another important part is Bearman's statement that doormen are not racists. It is very ironical considering that doormen do not treat all visitors in the same way. I have learned a lot from this book. In particular, I have learned that two social groups can live and interact with each other irrespective of their differences in the social realms. The fact that doormen seem to treat all clients equally is one of the things that fascinates me.

The book reveals how the low social class tends to embrace equality even though they may not get the same treatment from the higher social classes. The book expands my knowledge about social inequalities. Bearman demonstrates a very good mastery of his techniques as he uses his knowledge to reveal how informal social networks can be used to perpetuate the issues of racism and discrimination in the society. He employs skills and professionalism to explain how the job market of the doormen works. Although it is a semi-skilled profession, it is very eminent that doormen's social ties tend to promote inequalities in their job market. Author also portrays how weak social ties affect individual's life.

On the other hand, Bearman reveals unequal position that exists between the Blacks and the Whites in the society. He reveals that Black people are treated indifferently from their White counterparts. He reveals how the authorities of the tenants tend to shape doormen's decisions. The doormen are expected to follow strict instructions and in

their line of duty they tend to perpetuate inequality and racial profiling. The former reveals that social occurrences such as discrimination can only be ended if those in authority take an action. Although the book is very informative and interesting, it leaves me with some questions. The key question that arises is how the tenants live in ignorance of the doormen's lives. I do not understand how they can be living together while the tenants are so uninformed about the doormen.

Conclusion



Peter Bearman's book is one of the most interesting books I have ever read. Bearman creatively uses ethnography to study a group that has not received sufficient attention in the past. Author's mastery of skills is one of the most interesting things that make him achieve his goal. He puts a lot of emphasis on the informal relationship that exists between the doormen and the tenants. Bearman reveals the social differences that exist between the two classes and how the doormen tend to study the social lives of the tenants, which they practice in serving their different tenants. The book is very informative and relevant to the social construct and inequalities that exist in the society. The author reveals how small social networks tend to perpetuate inequalities in the whole society. On the other hand, the book also reveals how the racial profiling continues to prevail in the society. Finally, although the doormen claim they are not racists, they are forced to act as such to meet the needs of various tenants.