

Hidden Rules among Classes

(adapted from Ruby Payne’s “Understanding Poverty”)

	POVERTY	MIDDLE CLASS	WEALTH
POSSESSIONS	People	Things	One of a kind objects, legacies, pedigrees
MONEY	To be spent, used	To be managed	To be conserved, invested
FOOD	Did you have enough? Quantity is key	Did you like it? Quality is key	Was it presented well? Presentation is key
TIME	Present is most important. Decisions made in the moment for survival.	Future is most important. Decisions are made based on future ramifications.	Traditions and history are most important. Decisions are made partly on basis of tradition and decorum.
EDUCATION	Valued but hard to see benefits and often not reality	Crucial for climbing success ladder and making money.	Necessary tradition for making and maintaining connections.
DESTINY	Believes in fate. Cannot do much to change fate.	Believes in choice. Can change future with good choices now.	Destined to be wealthy and important. Born into it.
LANGUAGE	Casual, slang. Language is about survival.	Formal. Language is about negotiation.	Formal. Language is about networking.
FAMILY STRUCTURE	Tends to be matriarchal.	Tends to be patriarchal.	Depends on who has the money.
DRIVING FORCES	Survival, relationships, entertainment	Work, achievement	Financial, political, social connections.