

Hidden Rules by Economic Class

Generational Poverty	Middle Class	Wealth
Decisions based on: survival, relationships, and entertainment	Decisions guided by: work and achievement	Decisions guided by: social considerations, financial, and political connections
People are possessions: It's worse to steal a girlfriend than a possession; relationships are more important than achievement. That is why you must defend your child no matter what he/she has done. Too much education is feared because the individual might leave.	Things are possessions. If materially security is threatened, the relationship might have to be broken.	Legacies, one-of-a-kind objects, and pedigrees are possessions.
The world is defined in local terms.	The world is defined in national terms. The National news is watched; travel tends to be national.	The world is defined in international terms.
Conflict is resolved through physical fighting. Skills for negotiating and resisting impulses are less known. Respect is given to those who can physically defend themselves.	Fighting is done verbally. Physical fighting is distasteful.	Fighting is done through social inclusion or exclusion and through lawyers.
Food is valued for quantity.	Food is valued for its quality.	Food is valued for presentation.

By Ruth Paynes and others. Items are generalizations.

Other Rules

Generational Poverty	Middle Class	Wealth
You laugh when you are disciplined because it saves face. Your mother is the most important person in your life; she is the keeper of your soul. An insult against your mother is unforgivable. The noise level is high, non verbal communication is more important than verbal. Emotions are openly displayed. Your value to the group is based on your ability to entertain. Destiny and fate govern. The notion of having choices is foreign. Discipline is about penance and forgiveness, not change. Tools are not available; therefore, concepts of repair and fixing may not be present.	A reprimand is taken seriously without smiling and with some deference to authority. Formal register is always used in an interview and is an expected part of social interaction. Work is part of daily life. Discipline is about changing behavior. To stay in the middle class, one must be self-governing and self-supporting. Choice is a key concept in the lifestyle. The future is very important. Formal education is crucial for future success.	The artistic and aesthetic are key to the lifestyle and include clothing, art, interior design, seasonal decoration, food, music, and social activities. For reasons of security and safety, virtually all contacts are dependent upon introductions (connections). Education is for the purpose of social, financial, and political connections, as well as to enhance the artistic and aesthetic. A key difference between the well-to-do and the wealthy is that the wealthy almost always are patrons of the arts and often have an individual artist to whom they are patrons as well.