



## Economic Disparity Contributing to Socio-political Stigmatization in South Asian Novel

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### ABSTRACT

The route to success in socio-political field is paved with enormous economic growth that fosters any attempt at social advancement or development. The desire for advancement adds complexity to the lives of ambitious individuals and makes it harder for them to overcome substantial economic difficulties. This paper examines the struggle of South Asian people towards socio-political development in Mohsin Hamid's *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*. In this paper, the socio-political success of the characters, its associated issues, and their impact on the protagonist's life are analysed considering Karl Marx's notion of social conflicts theory. The idea suggests that individuals and groups' relationships are based on conflict rather than on agreement. They want wealth and power to further entrench themselves and mistreat others who are weaker than them. The novel portrays protagonist's life is targeted by economic-based social issues that limits his plans to get success in socio-political arena. He exerts great effort, yet contemporary societal mores stand in the way of his success. The findings reveal that various characters try their best to carve out a place for themselves in the world and advance their social-political standing, but they are not accepted by the emerging metropolitan culture, and they end up broken-hearted after a failed relationship.

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## 1. Introduction

It is a reality that economic growth always plays vital role in determining the progress and success of the society. It has been noticed in South Asian societies that people cannot live apart from societal institutions, racial, ethnic differences, and personal identities. Everybody expects to live valuable life. Individuals' social status varies from one culture to the other based on factors such as his caste, country, and the communal rules of the society. This article analyzes the protagonist's mechanisms to be successful in socio-political field as he navigates the challenges of economic disparities, urbanization, and the quest of money in *How to get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* in the backdrop of social conflict theory. In this context, urbanization refers to the movement of people from rural to urban areas (Cosser, 1967). Religion, culture, economy, politics, and social status are all potential sources of contention among city dwellers. The urbanization dilemma is exacerbated by the existing wealth and resource gap in modern societies. Conflicts arising from urbanization lead to unequal access to the resources of the society. They keep behaving in accordance with the limitations imposed upon them by their social status. The selected novel covers similar ground. The protagonist of this tale hails from a dysfunctional family in a poor, rural region of Pakistan. His family's financial situation prevents him and his siblings from providing a typical childhood and get success in socio-political field. They face scarcity of economic resources that resulted in their failure. Mohsin Hamid's *how to get filthy rich in rising Asia* is a page-turner for two reasons: firstly, it's a heartbreaking and

surprisingly clear story about love and desire; and secondly, it's an iconic look at the massive social and economic shifts taking place throughout all of expanding Asia.

The story takes place in an unidentified nation like Pakistan, and it focuses on the journey of an anonymous legend who travels from a destitute hamlet to a sinking city in order to create (and release) a fortune in the water industry over the course of 70 years. The hero is the anonymous, and the story is told in the first-person present tense, making it seem like a self-help manual. It's possible that the author's use of a stumbling narrative structure is actually a device that allows him to zoom in and out of his protagonist's life like a fax machine, showing us intimate details about the enduring love he shares with a woman he meets as a child (the pretty girl) and then zooming out to show us how his entrepreneurial career is similar to that of millions of others. The question of whether a man's value rises or falls with his social standing has been hotly debated for centuries. The fundamental argument has held up better throughout this discussion since it is a universal truth that a person with more financial power also acts in accordance with his position.

Karl Marx is credited as the originator of the concept of socioeconomic stratification, or the separation of society into affluent and destitute strata. Marx's idea depends on a person's financial stability; therefore, we may infer that a person's wealth impacts his access to resources. It is the other way around: those who have financial stability are better equipped to adapt to new circumstances and put themselves and their own success at the forefront. Then distinctions in religion, color, country, or sexual orientation, variations in economic status, as viewed through a Marxist perspective, intensify the split between people in this paradigm. Yet the straightforward Marxist assumption on which this reality is based hides its complexity. The language barrier is the most evident difficulty that stands in the way of fully appreciating its wonders. One's interactions with others are highly impacted by one's linguistic abilities. There is a strong correlation between socioeconomic position and the lingua franca of a population. The affluent and the poor tend to speak in quite different ways. Finally, the higher classes use the dialect as a tool of oppression against the lower classes. These problems are analyzed in relation to the social conflict theory. One branch of Marxism, known as social conflict theory, posits that in-group rivalry and out-group cooperation underlie all social interactions. The gap between those who have and those who have not is completely unbridgeable since communication occurs on both deep and surface levels. Those in power will do everything it takes to maintain the economic gap between themselves and the growing number of urban, working-class individuals (Mutuku, 2018).

A core tenet of the conflict theory is that violent conflict is the only impetus for societal change. In support of this assertion, they argue that conflicts are the root cause of differences and that resolving one set of differences leads to yet another set of differences, and so on. (Azar, Jureidini, & McLaurin, 1978). Class conflict, according to Marx and Engels, has always been there and has only become more severe as global prosperity has grown. Discord at the locus of control has disastrous consequences. When people let themselves get drawn into a struggle in which they lose sight of the importance of enjoying life and focus only on making money without giving any thought to the ethical repercussions of their conduct, they experience depression and anxiety (Mutuku, 2018). Because of these differences, crime, swindling, and dishonesty flourish, which is harmful for everyone. Because of succumbing to the negative perceptions that prevent them from fully engaging in urban society, many people feel like a failure, a burden, and a depressed soul. Our analysis expands upon this in following chapters.

### **1.1. Statement of the Problem**

Exclusion and discrimination are social issues that affect people everywhere. This paper analyzes the significance of economic resources in the success and failure of various characters in pursuit of socio-political advancement of the struggling class in *How to get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* in the backdrop of social conflict theory. The hardship of various characters specifically the protagonist is analyzed to see how he succumbs to poverty and fights to raise his socio-political status as part of the society which suffers due to economic disparity and inequality.

### **1.2. Objectives of the Study**

- To examine the struggle of various characters for socio-political success as portrayed in *How to get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*.

- To find out the role of economic resources in the success and failure of the protagonist in the selected novel.

### 1.3. Research Questions

- How do various characters struggle for socio-political success in *How to get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*?
- Why is the role of economic resources significant in the success and failure of the protagonist in the selected novel?

## 2. Literature Review

This component of the inquiry by the researchers includes Marx's intellectual underpinnings and his concept of social conflict are dissected in the first section that provides a theoretical basis for analyzing the selected novel. Marx's philosophy is grounded on Hegel's logic of rationalizations, even though a key distinction may be seen between the two. Hegel acknowledges that the mind is a modern phenomenon, but only in the sense that the past dictates the present. Yet, Marx argues that the last item is the most significant when thinking about the past. Logic may be thought of as a network of interconnected concepts. One notion may serve as a proposal, while the opposite could be called an anti-proposition. When two people have reached this point in their relationship, they need and want to be mingled. The third idea is a synthesis of the previous two, but by contrasting them, it reveals flaws in each. The proper reaction is called a "union." It's not uncommon to see groups of three." (Popper & Popper, 1996). People who regularly participate in one of these activities are more likely to have some kind of semantic link, such as agreement or disagreement (Barry, 2007).

Truth, according to both structuralists and post-structuralists, is determined by regional speech patterns, although the two schools of thought take quite different approaches to this problem. Yet, structuralists accept an autonomous style in which the truth is everywhere, all the time, and an objective truth, whereas post-structuralists insist on the peculiar fact that the truth is fictitious. Dialect is a factual category, as Mills has pointed out, and I agree with him. He uses a number of expressions to convey his conviction that the words we use to express ourselves reveal our level of intellect, despite the fact that dialect changes from speaker to speaker. If different "implications are taken into consideration, they're moreover developed socially" (Knoop, 2020). It is clear that developed countries have promoted their language that their language Social conflict theory has answered a lot of questions that range from the domestic to the international level, for example, the monopoly of a husband in the home solely rests in his status, his earning makes him superior to his wife; the same situation exists on other levels, such as in an industry, where the upper class people never let the poor people even sit on equal footing with them; and on an international level, it is clear that the situation described When the protagonist's family moves to a city and he is sent to a college where he is unable to establish himself with the rest of the system and subsequently joins some bad company, they encounter the identical conditions outlined in the novel's opening chapters.

The bourgeoisie and the working class are at odds, according to Karl Marx's theory of social struggle. The bourgeoisie are the wealthy and powerful elite, whereas the proletariat are the working class who are not as well off. The upper class, the bourgeoisie, may be less in number, but they always manage to keep the proletariat under control by virtue of their access to resources and their stranglehold on money. Theorists like Karl Marx predicted that as capitalism took hold, society would be organized like a pyramid, with the wealthy bourgeoisie at the top and the working class, or proletariat, at the bottom, fulfilling the bourgeoisie's demands. Conceptual scaring all throughout the bourgeoisie was expected to preserve the unpredictable circulation confined by the conflict premise, which in turn would lead to support of the show conditions by the working class. With the goal of maintaining their own superiority and preventing the assimilation of those below them, the elite are rationally motivated to establish systems of norms, conventions, and new community assemblies. Marx cautioned that the working class and the poor were in risk of falling farther into poverty, and he suggested that increased awareness of this disparity may lead to an insurrection. The struggle circle would echo if the settings were changed to alleviate the pressures on the people.

It is essential to consider the following types of social conflict in order to fully grasp this idea. 1. Rivalries, 2. Revolt, 3. Discrepancies in Procedure, 4. Retaliation. Rivalry: Social conflict

theorists argue that celebration is present in all relationships, whether they are temporary or permanent. Competition is based on limited resources, such as money, materials, goods, etc. These thinkers believe that competition, rather than support, exists when people in a society face challenges for resources such as social rank, domination, and company. The story depicts two types of rivalries: one between the protagonist and the upper class, and another between the protagonist and the underworld, neither of whom ever wanted him to succeed without getting their fair part of the spoils.

**Revolt:** Those who subscribe to the social conflict theory argue that oppression of the poor or the lower class inevitably leads to a rebellion, which in turn leads to a rapid shift in the balance of power. In the chapter titled 'Be Prepared to employ Violence,' the protagonist hires a bodyguard to eliminate the person who is blackmailing him for money, marking a turning point in the story. The protagonist also defies convention on several other times, such as when he pays others to turn his illegal money into legal currency.

**Discrepancies in Procedures:** According to the social conflict theory, authority in a community tends to be held by a narrow set of families. They use that authority to oppress the poor and enrich themselves at their expense; as a consequence, their children will want that power for themselves and will continue to repress subsequent generations of poor and working-class people, perpetuating the cycle of inequality. For example, in Mohsin Hamid's book *How to Become Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*, the protagonist faces out against a group of business tycoons whose family enterprises would never allow them to become as successful as they have.

**Retaliation:** Social conflict theorists argue, this unfair system will lead to retaliation. When the working class feels oppressed by the upper class, some of them may resort to violence to defend themselves, which may have dire consequences for the whole society. Karl Marx believed that capitalism was a major contributor to social division. Those in the factory's working class or lower socioeconomic strata have little to no part since they get such a little percentage of the factory's profits in the form of pay. They are purchased and sold for a profit, and after their usefulness has been exhausted, they are discarded or fired.

In addition to monetary variations, incongruities of administrative authority and social structure produce conflict, as the German humanist Max Weber agreed with Marx. Weber argued that people's reactions to difference were hampered by course differences and extents of social mobility, as well as acuties in the validity of persons in specialty roles, and that varied clusters survive in fundamentally different ways (i.e., learning, race, and sex). Weber contributed to the development of Marx's conflict theory. He disagreed with Marx's view that class is the sole source of social conflict and instead argued that disagreements may arise over any issue in every society. Weber's analysis included a religious dimension; he said that individuals use religion for their own ends by creating distinct groups delineated by creed, color, and other superficial characteristics.

The protagonist's education, clothing, work, company, and even his lifestyle all come into conflict, making the piece of literature a comprehensive collection of justifications supporting Max Webber's thesis. The focus of this research is on clarifying the human or social reality. In addition, qualitative content analysis is supported because it goes beyond merely counting words or extracting objective substance from writings to examine the implications, designs, and subjects idle in those writings, which helps to understand the social reality investigated inside the ponder in a subjective yet logical manner.

As we've seen, functionalism has mingled perspectives on the benefits and drawbacks of city living, concrete culture, and the suburban lifestyle as a whole. When weighed against the current climate of uncertainty, conflict theory's arguments stand out as particularly sharp. According to conflict theory, this kind of battle is most apparent inside the nation's cities, where the haves and the have-nots lead vastly different lifestyles. On the one hand, city dwellers tend to be well-off enough to afford opulent amenities. They eat at upscale eateries and reside in exclusive neighborhoods. They only shop at the most upscale and gratifying establishments. On the other hand, the homeless often stay in dilapidated buildings and have trouble making ends meet. In addition to this fundamental dissimilarity, experts of conflict point out that the diverse backgrounds and social interactions of city people often lead to conflict, as the emotions and worldviews of some city residents clash with those of others. Humanist Thorsten Sellin (1938),

writing at a period of huge movement of people from various countries to American cities, provides one of the most convincing explanations of this stance when he writes that transgression is that the result roughly of cultural war. John Logan and Harvey Molotch, two prominent sociologists, coined the phrase 'development machine belief system' to describe the worldview that guides the planning and refinement of such products (Logan & Molotch, 2007). These ideas help us analyze the selected text to achieve the desired objectives.

### **3. Research Methodology**

This chapter provides a high-level discussion of the strategies used in this research to accomplish its aims. Theoretical viewpoint development, research design, methodology, and procedures are all examined in relation to the process of performing this study. This paper examines Mohin Hamid's *How to get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*, a novel that depicts many forms of class, socioeconomic, and racial discrimination against the protagonist's own people. The research is meant to examine their plight and identify the most effective means of aiding them as they fight the wrongs of urbanization. This analysis focuses on the problems of lower-class people and their snubbing by urbanization in the light of social conflict theory. As the studies are done in the realm of the social sciences and focus on topics such as human behavior, societal concerns, beliefs, and interpersonal connections, it is inevitable that the findings are interpreted in a variety of ways. This study employs the concepts of socioeconomic status differentiation and discussion to enquire into the effects of urbanization on individuals. Scholarly considerations of Karl Marx's notion of the social conflict theory and Hypothesis are linked to undertake this research. The idea is shifted in politics, and society with the goal of establishing and enforcing widespread social, economic, and political conformity. The data included in this study comes from a wide variety of places, including novels, the internet, periodicals, newspapers, and encyclopedias. This piece of writing makes use of both digital and print mediums. Textual analysis techniques have been used to interpret the data in the light of descriptive codes provided by the farmwork to achieve the objectives of the study.

#### **3.1. Data Analyses**

The researchers analyze Mohsin Hamid's *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* in the light of tenants provided by social conflict theory. In this first section, we analyze the novel to answer the research questions one by one. Marx's idea of social conflict serves as lens through which we examine the text to achieve the objectives of the study. According to social conflict theory, middle-class and working-class people face unique challenges. Many key concepts from social conflict theory are reflected in the novel's themes and narrative. The misery of a society is traced back to the unequal distribution of wealth, which, in turn, is blamed on social stratification, according to this theory (Marx & Engels, 1848). Everyone, including your dad, was on time for the flight. The neighborhood adjacent to him is traversed by a single mud road. He thinks they're overbearing and callous (Hamid, 2014). In light of what has just been said, it should come as no surprise that the protagonist's father is a working-class city dweller who spends his vacations ploughing land that will never be his. In this case, the lesson is used for educational gain in management training. Hence, the two social groups have competing interests (Marx & Engels, 1848). So also, Mohsin Hamid states in his novel:

He leads you to the side of the street and tells you to lie face down within the earth.... he says, his voice high pitched, nearly prepubescent. "You think you'll buttfuck your betters? "Your lips move but no sound rises (Hamid, 2014). This illustrates that the hero's ultimate purpose in life is to achieve greatness, a universal aspiration shared by all people. Whether one is born into a regal household or a humble hut, everyone gets the same basic needs met security in knowing his name and having a secure income. In gestures not even a single glimpse of values can be seen and especially in case of poverty the rules are turned upside down and "The final proposal you have got fair gotten comes from a well off businessman, portion of the city's foundation, who among other things claims a match bottled water operation, and onto whose turf you've got started to expand" (p. 124). There is evidence that people from different socioeconomic backgrounds have social links to one another. A reminder that the powerful often use the services of the less fortunate is provided by the fact that the thug sent to frighten the protagonist also hails from a less privileged background. He says, "You make no say of your gunpoint caution to your spouse, but it leads you to ask a gathering of people with the neighborhood head of an outfitted group" (p. 127). This argument is congruent with the social conflict theory being addressed since it emphasizes the interconnected nature of power. To escape that jam, our hero

had to go beg for protection money from yet another local thug. The event had a significant impact on him personally, he was unable to concentrate on his personal life too and asserts, "You have not actually seen him some time recently, but as a part of the same clan you anticipate him to concur to an assembly, and undoubtedly he does not keep you holding up for long" (p.128).

To the bourgeoisie, it is their duty to improve the lot of the poor, and those at the bottom have no right trying to improve their lot themselves. The more fortunate people of society who value their social status should always be protected against those who dare to strive beyond their socioeconomic status. Mohsin Hamid states in this regards, "For you the weeks pass in full pressure, you look ceaselessly flicking around you as you drive, pondering whether you'll be assaulted, and pondering moreover what, in case anything, your protect will be able to ensure you" (p.131). Similarly, it is explained by Herbert and De Vries (1949) "It's troublesome to cross from one economic lesson to another. You'll suffocate in Champaign." (p.34). As a result of the civilization's societal setup, it's tough to break through economic barriers. No matter how hard someone works, they will always seem like they come from a lower socioeconomic status if they come from a poor or middle-class household. Since our destinies are set at the time of our birth, this is the case. Those at the top don't want those at the bottom competing with them, thus if someone from the lower classes confronts the elite, he will have to pay a price. Hamid says, "In the midst of this clamor you see the shooter striding towards you, and you turn to your watch, but he has as of now caught on. Your watch shoots thrice through your windscreen" (p. 134). A person's needs are the root of all their misery. Those from higher socioeconomic brackets have a habit of using and taking advantage of others from lower socioeconomic brackets. To those who study social conflict, those in authority inevitably betray those who have legitimate demands. In this line, we meet two threatening individuals: the protagonist's bodyguard and a hired thug. He further writes that "The shooter falls. You're prepared to escape but your watch opens his entryway and steps out onto the road. One of the bullets has unstuck a curly-haired piece of skull" (p. 135). As the protagonist's bodyguard finally manages to shoot the thug, we see two more people sent to the hereafter.

The book *How to Become Filthy Wealthy in Rising Asia* by Mohsin Hamid is. A satirical look at contemporary Pakistan shown through the eyes of a poor provincial youngster who rises to become a business magnate via hard work and an intuitive grasp of the market. People have little choice but to drink the same water their livestock does, and when it rains, it flushes away several pools of stagnant water that may harbor a variety of diseases. So, "The individuals of your town remember themselves downstream of where they wash their dress, a put in turn downstream of where they drink. More distant upstream, the town some time recently yours does the same" (Hamid, 2014). The novel moreover satirizes the state of issues within the school and amid exams. He composes, "There are fifty understudies in your lesson and stools for thirty. The others sit on the floor or stand" (Hamid, 2014). Indeed, more regrettable is seen amid exams. "A little installment and exam invigilators are willing to miss neighborly cheating" (p.60). A Pakistani reader would not find these revelations surprising. Workers put in long hours but aren't compensated enough to cover basic needs like food and schooling for their families. He says, "We don't have a scale. The sector's uniting. In two a long time there won't be a dozen water firms working in this city. There will be three, at most four. And we won't be one of them" (Hamid, 2014). What we do know is that data is controlled. And so "information has become central to war, that most exposed of our implies by which control is looked for" (p. 160). The ability to project one's authority is more important than actual power itself. Power commands deference by arousing primal fears in those who oppose it. The bourgeois class is well-aware of this fact and uses it to their advantage by manipulating the media. People now realize that the media is the conduit via which they may reach their destination. Two major categories characterize the various levels of social stratification: administrators and subjects (Marx & Engels, 1848). Hamid very rightly second the issue that "In trade of participation, you're given a month-to-month cash stipend, nourishment and clothing, and a bed at an inn. You're moreover given assurance, not as it were from other understudies, but from the college authorities, pariahs, and indeed the police" (p.61). In theory, the same issue arises. Social conflict theorists often center their analyses on the gap that opens between the well-off and the poor. Increased national knowledge and awareness of such issues have resulted from Mohsin Hamid's study of Pakistan's social structure, which promotes social growth and an established social setting within the framework of academic class and academic labor. The author describes a scenario in which a former military commander takes part in and delights in the debasement of the water trade. When a former officer is involved in simulated exercises, it is a troubling sign for the state of a

country's defense and security. The lover of a young lady was killed in a terrible occurrence at a shop, raising new questions about the effectiveness of present security planning and management. A coworker's untimely death in a medical facility may be conclusive evidence of a lack of awareness, care, freedom, negligence, slackness, failure, or incompetence on the side of the staff. There is an urgent need for the most basic relief and supplies.

#### 4. Conclusion

The analysis proves that Mohsin Hamid's *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* portrays variety of characters who use powerful trapping tricks of administrative elites to weaken the economic growth that resulted in poor projection of socio-political struggles in the novel. In addition, the analysis shows that the influential members of society often misappropriate or even create socially manipulated personalities to serve their own ends that hinder the success of struggling class individuals. The economic resources play vital role in their success and failure by determining their positive and social standing. It is noticed that the protagonist works hard to uplift his socio-political status, but he fails because he cannot manage resources to fulfill his ambitions. The study shows the amazing truth that the lower classes, the oppressed classes of society, react to the imposing economic model of the administrative few, and via this response, they cannot succeed in upgrading their material status. Several of these figures are the subject of analysis in the novel's major argument. The monetary success testified to by one's contemporaries does not define a person's potential for socio-political success. It is a point of contention among functionalist sociologists whether urban areas maintain high levels of social harmony. Disputes in cities often have their origins in the radically different social structures of the city's population particularly in economic division. Conventional interactionism posits that demographic variables such as socioeconomic status, racial and ethnic composition, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, age, and political leaning all play a role in shaping how people suffer because of economic growth.

Further it is witnessed that this paper in its description of the change in socio-political advancement is a contingent to the economic growth of the country. The protagonist's predicament is symbolic of the difficulties confronting members of the working-class who wants to move into the middle or higher classes. In this article, however, the author portrays economic growth as a hindrance to accomplish one's personal goals including love, success and marriage. The analysis provides evidence that the unequal distribution of wages in the country contributes to the country's severe class strife in socio-political field. Such measures hinder the growth of a country by further widening socio-political gaps. These ideas can further be analyzed by using the paradigms of liberalism, structuralism, postmodernism and socialism to determine the threatening environment to our socio- economic and socio-political success.

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