SOCIAL STRATIFICATION
Chapter 8

Section 1: Dimensions of Stratification
What is **Social Stratification**?

- The ranking of people or groups according to their unequal access to scarce resources.

- Resources:
  - Income
  - Wealth
  - Power
  - Prestige
How is social stratification related to social class?

- Each of the layers of social stratification is a social class.
- A segment of society whose members hold similar amounts of resources and share values, norms, and an identifiable lifestyle.
- Technologically developed countries generally have 3 broad categories:
  - Upper
  - Middle
  - Lower
- These are subdivided into smaller categories.
The Economic Dimension

• *First dimension of social stratification*

• Karl Marx believed that capitalist societies would ultimately be reduced to 2 social classes.

• Emphasized the unequal distribution of economic resources

• Those who owned means for production = *Bourgeoisie*

• Those who worked for wages = *Proletariat*
The Economic Dimension ➔ Distinguish between **Income** and **Wealth**

- **Income** = amount of money received by an individual or group over a specific time period
  - Your paycheck
- **Wealth** = total economic resources held by a person or group

![Graph showing actual,美国人的看法, and what they would like the distribution of wealth to be. Source: Michael I. Norton, Harvard Business School; Dan Ariely, Duke University.](image-url)
Income Inequality in the U.S.
http://www.salon.com/2015/07/15/35_soul_crushing_facts_about_american_income_inequality_partner/
YOUR GREED IS HURTING THE ECONOMY!

RAISE THE MINIMUM WAGE
Average Income Per Family
Distributed by Income Group

- Top 0.01%: $23,846,950
- Top 0.01-0.1%: $2,802,020
- Top 1%: $1,019,089
- Top 1-10%: $161,139
- Bottom 90%: $29,840

2010 data. Includes capital gains. Source: Emmanuel Saez, University of California-Berkeley
The Power Dimension

- Second dimension of social stratification
- Power = ability to control the behavior of others, even against their will

- Can you exercise power without being wealthy?
  - Money/ownership can give individuals power
  - Expert knowledge on something can give you power
  - Fame is another basis for power
  - Power attached to social positions we hold
  - Having followers or people on your side can give you power
CAPITOL GAIN

*Why Washington is closer to Wall Street than Main Street.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEDIAN NET WORTH OF AMERICAN FAMILIES</th>
<th>YOUR ODDS OF BEING A MILLIONAIRE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$120,000</td>
<td>1 IN 22</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEDIAN NET WORTH FOR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS</th>
<th>MEMBER OF CONGRESS’ ODDS OF BEING A MILLIONAIRE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$912,000</td>
<td>NEARLY 1 IN 2</td>
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</table>
Which one is more prestigious?
The Prestige Dimension

- Third dimension of social stratification
- Prestige = recognition, respect, and admiration attached to social positions
  - Defined by your culture and society
The Prestige Dimension

• Must be voluntarily given, not claimed
• Social positions that are valued have the most prestige
• Even though wealth and power usually determine prestige, that isn’t always the case
Rank these occupations based on how much “prestige” you associate with them

• Lawyer 4
• Surgeon 1
• Police officer 5
• High school teacher 3
• Veterinarian 2
• Priest 6
SOCIAL STRATIFICATION
Chapter 8

Section 2: Explanations of Stratification
Functionalism Theory of Stratification

- Stratification assures most qualified people fill the most important positions.
- Recognizes that inequality exists because certain jobs are more important than others and these jobs require special talent and training.
Conflict Theory of Stratification

- Inequality exists because some people are willing to exploit others
- Stratification based on force rather than people voluntarily agreeing to it
- Based on Marx’s ideas of class conflict
- **False consciousness** = adoption of the ideas of the dominant class by the less powerful class
Symbolic Interactionism Theory of Stratification

• American children are taught that a person’s social class is the result of talent and effort
  – People “on top” have used their abilities and worked hard
  – People “on bottom” lack talent and/or motivation to succeed
Bellringer 4/12

• Do you think people try to set themselves apart from other social classes through the things they wear/own? Yes or no? Give examples.

• Which of your possessions have you acquired, consciously or unconsciously, to enhance your status – designer label clothes or shoes?
People Like Us: Social Class in America

COPY THESE QUESTIONS DOWN

1. What do you think that the Part I title “Bud or Bordeaux” means?

2. What is meant by the term “status symbol?”

3. What is at the heart of this conflict?

4. Which groups does the program indicate are in favor of the co-op, and which the supermarket? What are their reasons for their choice? How would you vote on this issue? Explain your choice.

5. What does bread symbolize in this story?

6. Compare the term "upwardly mobile" with "social climber" -- is there a difference? In what situation is each term usually applied?
Class Consciousness

- Americans see income inequality but have never developed sense of class consciousness
- **Class Consciousness** = identification with the goals and interests of a social class

- Sociologists have identified some major classifications of social class:
  - Upper class
  - Upper middle class
  - Middle class
  - Working class
  - Working poor
  - Underclass
Upper Class

• Includes only 1% of population
• Divided into:
  – Upper-upper
  – Lower-upper
• Upper-Upper class: based on blood rather than sweat and tears
• Lower-Upper class: achievement and earned income rather than family name and inherited wealth
Middle Classes

• Most Americans believe they are middle class.
  – Only 40-50% are
  – Most are not in upper-middle class
• Upper-middle = 14%
• Middle-middle = 30%
Working Class

- Lower-middle class are the **working class**
- Almost 1/3 of population are this class
- Some in working class may earn more than middle-upper class people but economic resources are lower than those of middle class
- Not likely to enter middle class
- Lack job security and benefits
Working Poor

• 13% of population
• Low-skill jobs with lowest pay
• Working poor people do not earn enough to rise above poverty line
Underclass

- 12% of population
- Usually unemployed or come from families with history of unemployment for generations
- Lack of education and skills

- Underclass have other problems:
  - Physical or mental disabilities
  - Single mothers with little to no income

- Most common characteristic of working poor and underclass = lack skills to obtain jobs to meet basic needs
SOCIAL STRATIFICATION
Chapter 8
Section 4: Poverty in America
QUESTION 1- TRUE or FALSE

The number of people living in poverty has decreased since the end of the most recent recession six years ago.
QUESTION 2- TRUE or FALSE

In the United States, more women live in poverty than men.
QUESTION 3- TRUE or FALSE

Since its inception in 1946, the National School Lunch program has served over 200 billion lunches to school children in need.
QUESTION 4- TRUE or FALSE

According to the U.S. government, a family of four—two adults and two children—is living in poverty if it earns less than $35,000 annually.
QUESTION 5- TRUE or FALSE

Most people living in poverty are African American
Measuring Poverty

- Poverty can be measured in two ways:
  - **Absolute poverty** = absence of enough money to secure life’s necessities
  - **Relative poverty** = measure of poverty based on the economic disparity between those at the bottom of a society and the rest of the society
Measuring Poverty in the U.S.

• U.S. government will set an annual income level and people will be considered poor if they are below that level

• Poverty line in America for family of four is $24,259
How many Americans are poor?

- Official poverty rate in America for 2014 was 14.8%
- 46.7 million people living in poverty
Identifying the Poor: Who are they?

• Most disadvantaged groups in the U.S.:
  – Minorities
  – Female-headed households
  – Children under 18
  – Elderly people
  – People with disabilities
  – People who live alone or people with nonrelatives
Race, Ethnicity, and Poverty (according to the book)

- Poverty rate for Latinos and African-Americans much higher
- Poverty rate for whites = 7.5%
- African-Americans and Latinos = 23%
- African-Americans and Latinos make up ¼ of U.S. population but make up nearly ½ of poor population
Gender, Age, and Poverty (according to the book)

- Nearly ½ of all poor households are female-headed
- The Feminization of Poverty
  - High poverty rates for women and children reflect trend in U.S. society
  - From 1960-1990, women and children make up an increasingly larger proportion of the poor
Why do women have a higher risk of being poor?

- Women earn only about $.77 for every dollar earned by men
- Women with children find it more difficult to find and keep regular, long-term employment
- Lack of good child-care facilities

IN THE NEWS:
- Paid maternity leave
- Universal pre-K
Weeks Of Paid Leave For New Mothers

Among advanced economies, the U.S. stands alone in not mandating paid maternity leave at the federal level for new mothers.

Source: OECD
What other groups make up the poor?

- Older Americans - people aged 65+- make up 9% of people in poverty
- People with disabilities make up 12% of people in poverty
- 1 out of every 4 poor persons lives alone or with nonrelatives
The War on Poverty

• Enacted by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1964

• Philosophy= help poor people help themselves

• 60% of first poverty budget earmarked for following:
  – Youth opportunity programs
  – Work experience programs
    • Designed for welfare recipients and unemployed fathers
Welfare Reform

• 1999: spending for education, training, employment, social services was $56 billion – 3% of government expenditures

• Payments for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) was less than 1% of federal budget
Welfare Reform in 1996

• Limits amount of time those able to work can receive welfare payments

• Three major elements:
  – Reduces welfare spending
  – Increases state/local power to oversee welfare rules
  – New restrictions on welfare eligibility
Did welfare reform work?

• 12 million on welfare in 1996 $\rightarrow$ 7 million on welfare in 1999
• Many that were on welfare found jobs but they were minimum wage entry-level job
  – Small chance of career advancement
• $\frac{1}{4}$ work at night
• $\frac{1}{2}$ report child-care problems
• Many without health insurance
SOCIAL STRATIFICATION
Chapter 8
Section 5: Social Mobility
Social Mobility

• The movement of individuals or groups between social classes

• 2 types of social mobility:
  – Horizontal
  – Vertical
Horizontal Mobility

• A change in occupation within the same social class
Vertical Mobility

• A change upward or downward in occupational status or social class

• Intergenerational mobility is a form of vertical mobility
  – A change in status or class from one generation to the next
Caste and Open-Class Systems

- Extent of vertical mobility varies from one society to the next
- Some societies have little mobility = caste systems
- Caste system = stratification structure that does not allow for social mobility
  - Called closed-class system
Caste System

- Statuses are ascribed or assigned at birth
- Cannot change statuses through any efforts of their own
- Examples:
  - Apartheid in South Africa
  - Caste system in India
Open-Class Systems

• A system in which social class is based on merit and individual effort; movement is allowed between classes
• U.S. has an open-class system for the most part
• Some limitations:
  – Minorities face challenges to advance their class
  – Some denied opportunities for class advancement
Upward and Downward Mobility

• U.S. has great opportunities for people to advance themselves
• “rags to riches” stories
• Great stories of upward mobility have occurred but great leaps in social-class are rare
Is upward mobility increasing?

- Big jump in opportunities after World War II
  - Parents thought that their children would be better off than they were
- New technologies and low-cost labor overseas make upward mobility for Americans harder today
- Compared to parents, U.S. workers today face more downward mobility
Social and Psychological Costs of Downward Mobility

- Lower self-esteem
- Despair
- Depression
- Feelings of powerlessness
- Lose of sense of honor
- Rising nationalism and populism