Social Stratification
Chapter 7
Social Stratification:

• …is the structured inequality of access to rewards, resources, and privileges that are scarce and desirable within a society.
• …the inequality of entire categories of people, who have different access to social rewards as a result of their status in a social hierarchy.
Class:

• …those people who stand in a similar position with regard to their opportunities to acquire the society’s economic rewards.
• …a group determined by the role it plays in economic production.
Class Consciousness:

• …recognition by the members of a class of the role they play in the production process.
• …the shared awareness that members of a social class have about their common situations and interests.
• …the recognition by workers of their unity as a social class in opposition to capitalists and capitalism itself.
Stratification Systems:

- Closed System-
- Caste System:
- …hierarchy of *endogamous* divisions in which membership is hereditary and permanent. Includes inequality both in status and in access to goods and services.
Caste System: Varnas

- Brahmins - (Priest/Scholars)
- Kshatriyas - (Nobles/Warriors)
- Vaishyas - (Merchants/Skilled Artisans)
- Shudras - (Common Laborers)
- Harijans/Chandeles - (Outcastes)
Stratification Systems: Cont’d

• Open System -
• Class System:
• …an open form of stratification based primarily on economic status, which may be subject to change.
Social Mobility

• …movement from one social status to another.
• Types of Social Mobility:
  • Intergenerational Mobility -
  • …movement up or down the hierarchy by family members from one generation to the next.
Types of Social Mobility: Contd’d

• Exchange Mobility:
• …changes in people’s social statuses as they exchange places with one another at different levels of the hierarchy.

• Structural Mobility:
• …changes in people’s social statuses as a result of changes in the structure of the economy.
Analysis of Class

• **Marx’s Analysis:**
  • …a class consists of all those people who share a common relationship to the means of production.

• **Bourgeoisie -**
  • …owners of the means of production, (property, factories, capital)
Marx’s Analysis: Cont’d

- **Proletariat** -
- …those who work for them. (Subordinate class)
- Relationship between the Bourgeoisie and the Proletariat?
Marx’s Analysis: Cont’d

- Exploitation:
- …the utilization of a subordinate group, by a group in a superordinate position for its own economic or other advantage. (Surplus wealth)
Weber’s Analysis

• Hierarchies are based on:
  • Wealth - Economic status
  • Power - Political status (party)
  • Prestige - Social status
• For Weber - Stratification can be seen as emanating from several sources, not simply one’s economic position.
Weber’s Analysis: Cont’d

• Weber - a class is comprised of those who stand in a similar position with regard to their opportunities to acquire the society’s economic rewards.
• “Similar position” includes:
  • Display of a particular life style.
Webers’s Analysis: Cont’d

• Aware of differences between themselves and other status groups.
• Common consumption patterns
  ... club membership
  ... residential areas
  ... schools
  ... intermarriage
Gerhard Lenski: Distributive Systems

- Distributive Systems - National
- Class Systems - Social criterion, (wealth, occupation, education, political authority, ethnicity, etc.)
Global Distribution of Income

- Grameen “Village” Bank- Muhammad Yunus, founder.

- *The Price of a Dream*, David Bornstein