

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.

Dimensions of Social Inequality

- Max Weber – Multidimensional model
- Wealth – Accumulated economic resources, their *economic status*.
- Power – Ability to achieve one's goals, even against the will of others. (*Political status*)
- Prestige – The admiration that a society confers on people. Their *social status*.

Societies Based on Levels of Social Inequality

- *Egalitarian Societies:*
- Ember...a society in which all persons of a given age-sex category have equal access to economic resources, power, and prestige.
- ...a society that recognizes few differences in status, wealth or power.
- Food-foraging peoples are characteristically egalitarian. (Achieved Status)

Societies Based on Levels of Social Inequality

- *Rank Societies-*
- Ember – (Page 109)
- ...have unequal access to prestige or status but not unequal access to wealth or power.
- ...is usually a fixed number of high-status positions. (Chief)
- Largely hereditary, kinship, lineage.

Societies Based on Levels of Social Inequality

- *Class Societies* – (Stratification)
- ...societies that are characterized by groups that have substantially greater or lesser access to economic resources and power.

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.

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.

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/Chandales - (Outcastes)

Global Distribution of Income

- Grameen “Village” Bank- Muhammad Yunus, founder.
- *The Price of a Dream*, David Bornstein

Gerhard Lenski: Distributive Systems

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

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)

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.

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: 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