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/Chandeles - (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, 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