

## RANK

Bottom line: Inequality is a fundamental feature of social systems

### Inequality

- central topic in American society
- Many people have much less than poor Americans

### Social Stratification

- Reflect hierarchies
- different societies rank people in different ways
  - example: the Indian caste system
    - hereditary
      - expected to marry people in your caste, kids will be in your caste
      - outcast comes from the caste system - people out of the caste
- "the untouchables" - people without a caste
  - handle the dirty jobs; cleanup garbage

### Americans

- believe that your wealth is a product of hard work - no caste system
- a lot of things a person can do to move up in society
  - The American Dream - written during the great depression

### Horatio Alger Jr.

- wrote close to 100 books
- books had a common theme about a poor young boy manages to achieve great success in life
  - manuals on how to be successful
  - how he finds bargains, place to sleep, working his way up the ladder

## CLASS

- class for sociologists refers to your place in society - how much money you have

## Karl Marx

- saw society as a product of economic arrangements
- the caste system was the "super structure" under that would be the "base" where you can find the working people such as the farmers
  - argues that in every society, the base shapes the super structure; the families and educated workers move up in society and make up the super structure
- capitalist societies there are 2 different structures
  - the capitalists & the working class; within these classes there are conflicts
  - capitalists want more money so they want to reduce wages whereas the working class wants more money & higher wages
  - this creates class conflicts
- workers go on strike to force the capitalists to raise wages (usually violent in the 19th century)
- TODAY: there are legal limits constraining strikers in labor disputes (not as violent)

## Class System

- over 90% says that they are middle class
- higher your class, the greater your wealth
- upper class usually from inheritance
- higher your social class, the more education you have
  - kind of clothes you wear, what food you eat, etc.
- class can be mapped
  - example: education levels in Manhattan
- Social Mobility - the ability to move up the class structure
- other nations have more mobility than America
  - mostly in northern Europe

## Ethnicity

- income is related to ethnicity
- whites have more than other ethnicities on average
- ethnic differences are mostly class differences

## Max Weber

- glass half-empty guy

- a lot of conflict in society
- argues that society is divided along 3 hierarchies
  - 1.) class
  - 2.) power (political)
  - 3.) status

## STATUS

- difference statuses in society
  - we think of expensive things
  - enough money that I can afford these expensive things to show off my class
- Weber argues that all classes have status symbols (high & low)
- Status can be correlated with social class (yachts, etc.)
- Groups have their own class (Christian motorcyclists)
- Tattoos are symbols of status (gang members)
- Civil Rights was a movement over STATUS not over CLASS
  - receive service at a lunch counter
- Women's rights
- Equality is about status
  - claims about respect
- Immigration debates are about status (not "real" Americans)
- during the prohibition, immigrants were linked to alcohol
  - symbolic issue for native-born, old, Protestants
    - Protestants disliked Italians because they drank wine during dinner in front of their children
- States that voted Prohibition had mostly Protestants

## Contemporary

- competitions over status
  - old white people don't want illegal immigrants; illegal immigrants saying they will do the work that we don't want to do to come into America

## Gini coefficient:

- most of society has a curve in money not a perfect line
- wealth is becoming concentrated at people at the top
- middle class is shrinking