

Stratification

Social stratification – STRUCTURED SOCIAL INEQUALITY

- Example--in a sports organization: Owners control the resources of the teams, players earn high salaries, yet do not control the team resources, sponsors provide the resources, fans provide revenue

Diverse sources of social stratification

- Race, class, and gender are overlapping systems of stratification

Views of Inequality

- Jean-Jacques Rousseau
 - Private property creates social inequality → social conflict
 - Social equality: no differences in wealth, power, prestige, or status
 - Two forms of inequality
 - Physical (natural): age, health, bodily strength
 - Social (political): prejudices
- Ferguson and Millar
 - Agreed with Rousseau
 - Inequality/conflict is good → some people are getting ahead and creating wealth
- Thomas Malthus
 - Inequality is good → controls population
- Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel
 - Relationships based on master-slave model
 - Slave is dependent on master, master is dependent on slave
 - Never died out, still have today with employer-employee relationships

Davis and Moore

- Functionalists, stratification serves purpose in society
- Society must distribute members within social positions, then motivate them to perform in those positions
 - Motivate by: Desire to fill position & desire to perform the duties in that position
 - Rewards:
 - Lures individuals into positions & distributes differentially according to position
 - 3 types
 - Sustenance & Comfort
 - Humor & Diversion
 - Self respect & Ego expansion
 - Ultimately gives rise to inequality
 - Positions become ranked according to functional importance and scarcity of personnel

Jackson – overview of stratification

Standards of Equality

- Ontological equality: everyone is created equal at birth
- Equality of opportunity: start with same opportunities, inequalities are fair
- Equality of condition: everyone should have an equal starting point
- Equality of outcome: everyone should end up with the same “rewards” regardless of starting point, opportunities, or contributions

Forms of Stratification

- Estate system: politically based, limited social mobility
- Caste system: religion based, no social mobility
- Class system: economically based system, somewhat loose social mobility
 - Karl Marx: society strictly divided into 2 classes → the proletariat and the bourgeoisie
 - Erik Olin Wright: people can occupy location in class structure that fall between 2 strict classes
 - Max Weber: group people based on value of property and lack of property (value of labor)
- The status hierarchy system → based on social prestige
 - Status is determined by what society thinks of the lifestyle of the community
- The elite-mass dichotomy system → that has a governing elite (a few leaders) who broadly hold the power of society

America Stratified today

- Socioeconomic status (SES): a person's position in stratified social order
- Income inequality is rising
- Working poor → deserve assistance
- Nonworking poor → can work but don't, have a weaker moral claim on assistance
- Globalization: rise in trade across national borders → main reason for rising income and wealth inequality

Social Mobility

- Moving between different positions in society, can be individual or group
- Horizontal: same rung on the ladder
- Vertical: moving up or down on the ladder
- Structural mobility: mobility that is inevitable from economy changes (ex: expansion of high tech jobs)
- Exchange mobility: people essentially trading positions → the number of overall jobs stays the same, with some people moving up and others moving down
- Status-attainment model: rank people by SES, specify characteristics of those who end up in more desirable occupations

Race

Race vs Ethnicity

Race → based on the physical traits

- Racial categories are randomly defined
- Racial categories exist in systems where social groups are arranged in a hierarchical fashion
- Race only has meaning situations where there is more than one racial group
- "A group of people who perceive themselves and are perceived by others as possessing distinctive hereditary traits"

Ethnicity → develops from social experiences

- Ethnic categories are geographically and historically defined
- Ethnic groups can co-exist without social groups in hierarchies
- Ethnicity has meaning independent of the existence of other social groups
- "A group of people who perceive themselves and are perceived by others as sharing cultural traits such as language, religion, family customs, and food preferences"

Race – Two Perspectives

- Essentialist/Biological perspective → race is fixed, biological categories
- Sociological perspective → race is a social concept - physical or cultural characteristics take on social meanings, become the basis for racism and discrimination.

What is Race? (Omi & Winant)

- Racial Formation Theory: Element of social structure & human representation
- Racial Projects: Processes thru which that link occurs

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Criminal Justice System

- Murder rates – African American males are the highest
- White men with a criminal record were more likely to be called back for a job interview than black men without a criminal record

White Privilege - McIntosh

- Not having to think about race
- Racism puts some people at an advantage
- Whites witness invisible white privilege – "blank checks" in the knapsack that allow people to be called back for a job over blacks - so powerful that whites do not even think about it, whiteness gives privilege over people of color
- Reduce racism: need to recognize the privilege it gives you

Symbolic Ethnicity

- Voluntary ethnicity
- Gain a sense of community, yet have individuality
- Common in Whites in the US

White Privilege and a Color Blind Society

- Mental Steps → misleading conclusion
 - Whites claim various ethnicities while maintaining status as White
 - Ethnicity seen as a non-issue
 - Ethnicity mixed with race
 - Race and ethnicity are seen as the same thing (each seen as a non-issue.)
 - Conclusion: Because race is perceived as a non-issue in all-White settings, it is assumed that race is a non-issue in interracial settings
 - The majority culture benefits the most → whites believe segregation and discrimination are no longer an issue, discrimination is illegal
 - Race does not matter as long as non-dominant groups conform to the general values and expectations of the dominant group
 - People are expected to adopt American names, become Christian, speak English as their primary language

Racial Conceptions at a Young Age

- 58 preschool children all day everyday for a year → 1-3 “episodes” involving race
- Study assumed children would not understand race or usage of concepts would be superficial & naïve
- Children would use race to → exclude, include, define oneself, define others, gain power & control

Conceptualism of race

- Reject biological view of race
- Race was never based firmly in scientific reasoning
- Phenotype ≠ Genotype

The Future of Race

- The 2000 Census created separate categories for race and ethnicity → allowed people to check off more than one box for racial identity
- Give a better idea of the diversity of the American population
- The income gap between blacks and whites is not greater than the wealth gap

Minority-Majority Group Relations

- Straight line assimilation: contact → competition → accommodation → assimilation
 - immigrants arrive, settle in, achieve full assimilation
- Primordialism – people do not easily shed their ethnic ties
- Pluralism: low degree of assimilation, coexistence of numerous distinct groups in one society
- Segregation: legal or social practice of separating people based on race or ethnicity

Dominance

- Withdrawal: oppressed group flees
- Passing: blending in with the dominant group
- Acceptance: compliant, hides true feelings of resentment
- Subaltern: oppressed group, present different self, “code switching”
- Collective resistance: revolution, genocide, protest

The New Racism

- Prejudice: thoughts, discrimination: actions
- Active-bigot: prejudiced, discriminates
- Timid-bigot: prejudiced
- Fair-weather liberal: discriminates
- All-weather liberal: none

Class

Weber → stratification:

- Class: economic dimension
- Status: social dimension
- Party: political dimension

Class Consciousness (Sternerheimer)

- America in many ways more segregated by class than by race