

## Classes in Western Society Today

- The upper class in the united states
  - Upper/elite class
    - Very small
    - 10% of population
    - Old money, athletes, actors
    - \$300,000+
  - Upper middle class
    - Professionals
    - Small business owners
    - \$120,000-300,000
  - Lower middle class
    - Teachers, nurses, civil servants
    - \$48,000-120,000
    - 20% of population
  - The working class
    - Broadly composed of people working in blue collar or manual occupations
    - Blue collar jobs
    - Factory workers, restaurant workers, clerical work
    - \$30,000-48,000
    - 20% of population
  - The lower class
    - Composed of people who work part time or not at all and whose annual household income is typically \$17,000
    - Part time laborers
    - > \$30000
    - Semi skilled labor
    - No promotions
    - Rent
    - 15%of population
  - the under class
    - individuals situated at the bottom of the composed of people from ethnic minority backgrounds
    - new urban poor
    - poverty neighborhood
    - unskilled
    - welfare
    - unemployed
    - 15% population
- What is an inheritance?
  - Life insurance
  - Monetary gifts
  - Time/labor
- Does an inheritance only take place after death?

- Who & What
  - 1 in 4 whites averaging \$144,652
  - 1 in 20 blacks averaging \$41,985
  - Black baby boomers will inherit \$.13 for every \$1 white baby boomers will inherit
  - Family Assistance
    - Whites \$2824
    - Blacks \$805

#### Benefits of inheritance

- Childhood quality of life
  - Education
  - Entertainment
  - Travel
  - Camp/private lessons
- Cultural capital
  - Knowing how to function in society
  - Etiquette, vocabulary, demeanor

#### Meritocracy-status and position based on individual merit

- Meritocracy and inheritance
  - Earn, deserved gift
  - Hard to combine
  - Difficult to delineate
  - Advantages
- Social Mobility
  - Vertical mobility
    - Movement up or down a hierarchy of positions
  - Horizontal mobility
    - Movement within a class
- Intragenerational mobility
  - Movement up or down a social stratification hierarchy during one's lifetime
- Intergenerational mobility
  - Movement up or down a social stratification hierarchy from one generation to another
- Exchangemobility
  - The exchange of positions on the socioeconomic scale such that talented people move up the economic hierarchy while the less talented move down
- Structural mobility
  - Mobility resulting from changes in the number and kinds of jobs available in a society

#### Poverty

- Transitional: unemployed
- Marginal: lacks stable employment
- Residual: chronic, multigenerational

- ABSOLUTE: severe, lacks resources to survive
- RELATIVE: compared to those around us

#### Working poor

- People who work, but whose earnings are not enough to lift them above the poverty line

#### The feminization of poverty

- An increase in the proportion of the poor who are female
- Growing numbers of women who are single mothers, divorced, or separated

#### Children in poverty

- Related to economic conditions and government spending

#### Theories of Poverty

- Cultural/ Behavioral
  - The poor are poor due to a lack of willingness to seize opportunities
  - Poor don't work hard enough
  - Welfare system & dependency effect

#### Explaining poverty

- Culture of poverty
  - Poor are socialized to learn values, beliefs, and lifestyles that are incompatible with upward mobility in the class system
- Dependency culture
  - Culture of individuals who rely on government welfare and subsidies rather than working for pay