

Chapter 9- Social Stratification

Social stratification- a society's categorization of its people into rankings of socioeconomic tiers based on factors like wealth, income, race, education, and power. Created and supported by society as a whole.

Wealth- the net value of money and assets a person has

Income- a person's wages or investment dividends

Systems of stratification

Closed system- little change in position, people can't shift levels, no relations between levels

Open system- based on achievement, allow movement and interaction between layers and classes

Caste system- closed, born into standing and remain there forever, cultural values

Class system- based on social factors and individual achievement, open

Class- a set of people who shares similar status with regard to factors like wealth, income, education, and occupation

Exogamous marriage- unions of spouses from different social categories

Endogamous union- marrying a partner from the same social background

Meritocracy- merit determines social standing, an ideal

Status consistency- describe the consistency or lack of an individual's rank across these factors, closed systems correlate with high consistency

Primogeniture- a law stating that all property would be inherited by the firstborn son

Standard of living- the level of wealth available to a certain socioeconomic class in order to acquire the material necessities and comforts to maintain its lifestyle. Based on factors like income, class, poverty rates. Closely related to quality of life

Upper class- money provides power, shape the identity of the nation, shape attitudes and values, old money- inherited, new money- earned

Middle class- broken into upper and lower groups, upper- degrees like business law and medicine, lower- degrees from 2 year community colleges, comfort is key

Lower class- aka working class, divided into the working class, working poor, and the underclass, jobs require little skill

Social mobility- the ability to change positions within a social stratification system

Upward mobility- an increase in social class

Downward mobility- lowering of one's class

Intergenerational mobility- a difference in social class between different generations of a family. Ex- parents different than children

Intragenerational mobility- difference in social class between different members of the same generation. Ex- siblings different than each other

Structural mobility- happens when societal changes enable a whole group of people to move up or down the social class ladder

Class traits- aka class markers, typical behaviors, customs and norms that define each class. Indicate the level of exposure a person has to a wide range of cultures. Indicate the amount of resources a person has to spend on items like hobbies, vacations and leisure activities

Global stratification- compares the wealth, economic stability, status, and power of countries across the world, analyze economic comparisons between nations and compares quality of life a person can have

Models of global stratification

- All models rank countries according to their relative economic status, or gross national product
- First, second, and third world countries. First and second world described industrialized nation, third world are referred to as undeveloped
- More developed (high wealth) vs less developed (less wealth)
- Defines countries based on GDP (avg national wealth per person), calculated by totaling the income of all citizens or the value of all goods and services produced in the country during the year
- Also compares the standard of living. Middle income nations rep the global average

Functionalism

- Davis-Moore thesis- the greater the functional importance of a social role, the greater must be the reward, Social stratification rep the inherently unequal value of different work, rewarding more important work with higher levels of income and power encourages people to work harder

Conflict theory

- Social stratification benefits only some people
- Strained working relationship between employers and workers still exists

Symbolic Interactionism

- People live and work with others like themselves
- People's appearance reflects their social standing
- Conspicuous consumption- buying certain products to make a social statement about status

Social stratification- structures and have quite devastating consequences inequality between groups. May be based on economics, gender, race, religion, age and others

3 key aspects: class, status, and power

Attributes: trait of society (open, closed), persists over generations, move within hierarchy, universal, belief systems in society usually try to justify

Why focus on it? It shapes all of our lives in fundamental ways, our choices and decisions, our optimism, can motivate or demoralize, can create societal crises and conflicts, can drive social change

Social class: occupation, education, income, home, wealth

Functionalist: societal sifting and sorting occurs based on system needs, individuals are ranked according to ability and merit and placed into appropriate positions, rewards are based on amount of work and effort put in, and the societal importance of the position, if we view the social world through functionalist lenses, stratification seems okay

Conflict theory: system is not purely merit based, inequalities in where we start from and institutional access and treatment along the way, has serious consequences for one's life chances, those in power often shape the reward structure and rules to their own benefit, stratification only benefits some at the cost of others

Chapter 10: Global Inequality

Global inequality- involves the concentration of resources in certain nations, significantly affecting the opportunities of people in poorer and less powerful countries