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Chapter 1 : Social Stratification: Meaning, Types, and Characteristics | Sociology (Words)

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Human society is not homogeneous but heterogeneous. Apart from the natural differences, human beings are also differentiated according to socially approved criteria. So socially differentiated men are treated as socially unequal from the point of view of enjoyment of social rewards like status, power, income etc. That may be called social inequality. The term social inequality simply refers to the existence of socially created inequalities. Social stratification is a particular form of social inequality. All societies arrange their members in terms of superiority, inferiority and equality. Stratification is a process of interaction or differentiation whereby some people come to rank higher than others. In one word, when individuals and groups are ranked, according to some commonly accepted basis of valuation in a hierarchy of status levels based upon the inequality of social positions, social stratification occurs. Social stratification means division of society into different strata or layers. It involves a hierarchy of social groups. Members of a particular layer have a common identity. They have a similar life style. The Indian Caste system provides an example of stratification system. The society in which divisions of social classes exist is known as a stratified society. Modern stratification fundamentally differs from stratification of primitive societies. Social stratification involves two phenomena i differentiation of individuals or groups on the basis of possession of certain characteristics whereby some individuals or groups come to rank higher than others, ii the ranking of individuals according to some basis of evaluation. Sociologists are concerned not merely with the facts of social differences but also with their social evaluation. Regarding the origin of stratification many views have been given. Types of Social Stratification: Social stratification is based upon a variety of principles. So we find different type of stratification. Each estate had a state. In slavery, every slave had his master to whom he was subjected. Characteristics of Social Stratification: On the basis of the analysis of the different definitions given by eminent scholars, social stratification may have the following characteristics. There is no society on this world which is free from stratification. Modern stratification differs from stratification of primitive societies. It is a worldwide phenomenon. Factors like age, sex, intelligence as well as strength often contribute as the basis on which statues are distinguished. Hence, stratification is social by nature. Stratification system is very old. It was present even in the small wandering bonds. In almost all the ancient civilizations, the differences between the rich and poor, humble and powerful existed. During the period of Plato and Kautilya even emphasis was given to political, social and economic inequalities. The forms of stratification is not uniform in all the societies. In the modern world class, caste and estate are the general forms of stratification. In India a special type of stratification in the form of caste is found. The ancient Aryas were divided into four varnas: The ancient Greeks were divided into freemen and slaves and the ancient Romans were divided into the patricians and the plebians. So every society, past or present, big or small is characterized by diversified forms of social stratification. The members of a class have similar social chances but the social chances vary in every society. It includes chances of survival and of good physical and mental health, opportunities for education, chances of obtaining justice, marital conflict, separation and divorce etc. Life style denotes a style of life which is distinctive of a particular social status. Life-styles include such matters like the residential areas in every community which have gradations of prestige-ranking, mode of housing, means of recreation, the kinds of dress, the kinds of books, TV shows to which one is exposed and so on. Life-style may be viewed as a sub-culture in which one stratum differs from another within the frame work of a commonly shared over-all culture. Social Stratification and Social Mobility: Social mobility refers to the movement within the social structure, from one social position to another. It means a change in social status. All societies provide some opportunity for social mobility. But the societies differ from each other to extent in which individuals can move from one class or status level to another. It is said that the greater the amount of social mobility, the

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more open the class structure. The nature, forms, direction and magnitude of social mobility depends on the nature and types of social stratification. Any group that improves its standard will also improve its social status. But the rate of social mobility is not uniform in all the countries. It differs from society to society from time to time. In India the rate of mobility is naturally low because of agriculture being the predominant occupation and the continuity of caste system as compared to the other countries of the world.

Types of Social Mobility: In social stratification the movement occurs in three directions. Social mobility is of two types: It refers to the movement of people from one stratum to another or from one status to another. It brings changes in class, occupation and power. It involves movement from lower to higher or higher to lower. There are two types of vertical mobility. One is upward and other is downward mobility. When an individual moves from lower status to higher status, it is called upward mobility. For example, if the son of a peon joins a bank as an officer, it is said to be upward social mobility but if he loses the job due to any other reason or inefficiency, he is downwardly mobile from his previous job. So downward mobility takes place when a person moves down from one position to another and change his status. It refers to the movement of people from one social group to another situated on the same level. It means that the ranks of these two groups are not different. It indicates change in position without the change in status. For example, if a teacher leaves one school and joins another school or a bank officer leaves one branch to work in another or change of residence are the horizontal mobility.

Horizontal mobility Apart from the above two broad types of social stratification, there are two other types of social stratification in terms of dimension of time. When changes in status occur from one generation to another, it is called intergenerational mobility. For example, if the son changes his status either by taking upon occupation of higher or lower rank with that of his father, there inter-generational mobility takes place. When changes in status occur within one generation, it is called intra-generational mobility. For example, the rise and fall in the occupational structure of a family which leads to change in its social status within one generation is called intra-generational mobility. Under the caste system status is hereditary. It is based on birth, it is purely an ascribed status. Once such positions are assigned, they can not advance and improve their social status in any way. Hence, caste as a major type of social stratification does not facilitate vertical social mobility.

Social Stratification and Class: Under this system vertical mobility is absolutely free. Movement from one status to another has no barrier. Status is based on achievement. It is determined by the talents, wealth, money, intelligence, power, education, income, etc. There is no inheritance of parental status. Like caste and class gender is another kind of social stratification system. Gender, perhaps is the oldest and permanent source of social differentiation. But within the broad hierarchy of caste and class, gender cuts across caste and class. In present day Indian society caste, class and gender are dynamic phenomena which vary between groups, communities and regions. Recent years have witnessed a thorough and widespread discussion on gender. It has claimed critical address within gender as a concept and as a set of practices has occurred during the last three decades. But it seems to have first appeared among American Feminists who wanted to reject biological determinism. Feminists prefer the term gender than sex. But the term gender means much more than sex and more inclusive than sex. It is a socially constructed category rather than biologically determined. The gender of a man is masculine and a woman is feminine. Neither a man nor a woman is sex alone.

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Chapter 2 : Difference between Social Stratification and Social Inequality

This is the second volume of a two volume work on biosocial approaches to social stratification and human inequality. The volume considers linkages between gender and stratification; between neurohormonal variables and status; and between health, reproduction, and social status.

Simply put, social stratification is the allocation of individuals and groups according to various social hierarchies of differing power, status, or prestige. Although divisions are often based on gender, religion, or race and ethnicity, the present entry focuses largely on socioeconomic inequalities, for the most part leaving other forms of social inequality to other entries. In this regard, social stratification is found in every society, even if it takes on slightly different forms. Uncovering what accounts for differences in social stratification among societies and within particular societies over time is a long-standing goal of the field. Although this debate continues to be an underlying motivation for much research on stratification, empirical research typically tackles questions for which evidence is more tangible. By the 1970s, stratification research was increasingly concerned with social mobility, though mostly within individual countries. By the 1980s, explaining cross-national differences in stratification became an important goal of the field. By now, stratification research is characterized by several debates. Although it has received somewhat less attention in the past decade or so, a classic debate centers on how socioeconomic position should be measured. Emphasis here has been on the applicability of measures of social class, status, and prestige. Although there are certainly important exceptions, differences in approach generally fall along territorial lines. European sociologists have tended to focus on relevance of occupation-based measures of social class, while North American sociologists have tended to rely on measures of socioeconomic status, which incorporate education as well as occupation. There have also been debates regarding the most effective ways to measure class and socioeconomic status. Yet other debates center on the importance of incorporating race and gender in studies of stratification. Finally, in recent decades emphasis has moved to the importance of education, both as a source of stratification on its own, and how it affects economic inequalities. Textbooks There are several good textbooks that students new to the field of social stratification would find useful. Three edited volumes are particularly good. Geared at the graduate level, Grusky, et al. Manza and Sauder also cover a wide range of topics in social stratification but is unique in its greater emphasis on political inequality. Class, race, and gender in sociological perspective, 3d ed. Several of the chapters are perhaps too challenging for most undergraduate students, however. Contemporary and foundational readings in race, class, and gender. Social science perspectives on social stratification.

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Chapter 3 : Inequality and Stratification | Sociology | The University of Chicago

*Social Stratification and Socioeconomic Inequality: Volume 1: A Comparative Biosocial Analysis [Lee Ellis] on www.nxgvision.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers. This is the first book devoted exclusively to the study of social stratification from a biosocial perspective.*

Many factors have been investigated as the central cause for income inequality in the United States. Additionally, there has been a growing concern regarding the gap between the richest of the rich and the poorest of the poor. Understanding the process of, and the factors contributing to, income inequality and the growing disparity between the wealthy and the poor helps scholars better understand the adverse consequences of inequality for individual health and personal security. How does income inequality contribute to stratification in the United States? Is stratification necessary for society to function? These issues are of central importance to understanding the very nature of society and how individual opportunities are restricted or expanded based on their family status. Yet, many people are oblivious to how social stratification and income inequality influences their daily lives. Issues such as these fit into the broader study of social inequality, and more specifically, income inequality. They also shed light on the consequences of inequitable access to resources and how income inequality affects individuals, educational opportunities, job opportunities, advancement in employment, and living a long and healthy life. Social stratification is the umbrella under which these concepts are united. In the United States, as is the case around the world, there is patterned inequality that divides society into categories in which there are disparities between access to social and economic rewards, with some people having more opportunity than others. Most scholars who investigate income inequality start from the foundation that there is social inequality that exists in the United States. This is attributed to variation in wealth, power, and prestige. Thio, Under the umbrella of scholarship on social stratification is one that focuses specifically on income as a primary factor that leads to differential opportunities and outcomes for members of society. Once thought of as a part of life. These scholars argue that inequality is not necessarily a function of society, but rather a result of institutional arrangements that perpetuate inequality from generation to generation. The results of inequality have also garnered additional attention among sociologists, economists, political scientists, criminologists, healthcare, and social service providers. Social and income inequality are political issues that are gaining attention in the media, among the public and politicians. Today there is still little consensus among these scholars regarding the causes and consequences of social inequality, income inequality, and ultimately the effects of inequitable opportunity on individual lives. Theories of Inequality There are many competing theories that attempt to explain income inequality on a national and international level. Most of these theories can be categorized into one of two theoretical camps: The functionalist perspective asserts that inequality is a central component to the organization of society and serves a purpose in structuring social relationships. On the other hand, conflict theorists argue that income inequality is part of a socio-structural force led by elites to increase their wealth and opportunity at the expense of the working and middle classes. Functionalism The theory of structural functionalism, coined by Davis and Moore, asserted that stratification was necessary in society. The primary reasons given for their claims were that stratification serves a useful function of society. That is, not every job or task is equally important or desirable; these various tasks require different skills and therefore, in order to fill such positions there must be variation in the types of rewards given. Davis and Moore go on to explain that the function of stratification is to motivate the labor force in a highly competitive market and that without competition for higher pay and thus, access to resources it would be difficult to fulfill all of the needs of society. In other words, if a lawyer whose job requires extensive training and multiple degrees and the garbage collector were paid the same amount, nobody would want to collect the garbage or spend the additional time earning a law degree to become a lawyer. More specifically related to income inequality, Davis and Moore argue that the reason there is such a disparity in income between those at the top of the social ladder and those

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at the bottom is 1 those at the top have more skills; and 2 those at the bottom perform jobs that are less important than those at the top. Conflict Theory In a significant departure from structural functionalism, many scholars who adhere to the writings of Karl Marx regarding capitalism argue that inequality is not necessary, nor does it serve a pertinent function. Rather, as they see it, inequality is a symptom of societal dysfunction. Scholars such as Tumin claim that inequality provides opportunity to the privileged while at the same time limiting the possibilities for those in the working class. Moreover, it works to reinforce the status quo whereby the rich are able to secure their privilege in society and those who are less privileged are forced to work under the rules of the privileged. Finally, because of the disproportionate system of rewards, there is the possibility for those who are less privileged to become hostile to the status quo, resulting in crime or other acts of resistance. Other scholars who subscribe to the ideas of Marx have further argued that income inequality is an unjust distribution of power whereby those who own large corporations and provide jobs to the working class have the ability to manipulate wages, perception of competition, while preserving their status by exploiting others. These two competing theories paint a very different picture of the factors that contribute to income inequality. Structural functionalists argue that inequality is a functional force in society that rewards those who do more meaningful work greater than those who do less important jobs. Conflict theorists argue that inequality is a result of larger socio-structural forces that manipulate those with the least power and privilege by promoting competition and controlling wages in favor of the wealthy. Further Insights Socioeconomic Factors Understanding the theoretical underpinnings of scholarship on social stratification and income inequality is only part of the vast work that has been completed on the subject. One of the most controversial aspects of inequality scholarship is the disparity not only between the rich and the poor but also the patterned inequality that has been shown to exist between whites and other racial groups, between men and women, and between those with low IQs intelligence quotients and high IQs, as measured on standardized tests. The contributions of socioeconomic indicators such as race, gender, and IQ to social stratification and income inequality are central to scholarly debates surrounding the causes and correlates of various subgroups in the population and their social status. Scholars who study these issues often find themselves in the most heated social debates about the causes of inequality. Race The entire section is 3, words. Income Inequality study guide and get instant access to the following:

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Chapter 4 : Economic inequality - Wikipedia

Social Inequality vs Social Stratification Although the concepts of social inequality and social stratification sound similar, there exists a clear difference between these two concepts. However, it is also important to point out that these are two interrelated proc.

Check new design of our homepage! Types, Characteristics, and Examples Social stratification is the arrangement of individuals or groups into a hierarchy. Here is an insight about the types, characteristics, and examples of social stratification. OpinionFront Staff Last Updated: Mar 5, What is Social Mobility? Movement of people or categories of people through the hierarchical system of stratification; for example, from lower class to middle class. Horizontal mobility is when there is change of occupation or position of an individual, but not an accompanied change of class. It is said that man is a social animal. This refers to the interdependent behavior of human beings. Although living in groups, mankind has a tendency of still forming further sub-divisions in a given group. This inclination of further categorizing within a group is seen across cultures. Whatever may be the basis; division of labor, peculiar skills of a group, role of exercising authority, prestige, or any other criterion, social stratification exists as a very foundational principle in the working of a society. Let us understand its meaning first and then look at its types, characteristics, and examples. Definition and Meaning Social stratification can be referred to as division of society into strata or layers that are superimposed one above the other. Social stratification is the arrangement of the members of a society into different categories of class, caste or a hierarchy based on factors like income, wealth, status, occupation, or even ethnicity. Sociology has borrowed the concept of stratification from the science of geology of the Earth into different layers. Unlike in geology though, where all layers of the Earth are the same, in sociology, there is an unequal distribution of rights and privileges through the social strata. Types of Social Stratification Social stratification is classified into four basic forms, which are slavery, estate, caste, and class. In tribal systems too, there existed hierarchy. Described as a form of primitive communism, generally the resources were equally divided among all the tribals. The society was divided into chiefs, shamans, and other tribe members. Based on the proficiency of some tribals in certain tasks, they were entitled to be heads of the clan due to their skills. Apart from the ancient human lifestyle, social stratification can be seen from the following social systems. According to Karl Marx, stratification separated a society into two mutually opposing categories, where one exploits the other the bourgeoisie gains at the cost of the proletariat. The term "class" thus originated in the context of ownership of the means of production. Max Weber further added two aspects of stratification, which were "status" and "power". Status refers to the social position of an individual. Social stratification defines the hierarchical structures of class and status in a society. It forms the larger power structure that influences all the social activities within that particular community. The relation of a master and slave was the peak of inequality in human history. A slave was defined by L. Hobhouse as a man whom law and custom regard as the property of another. Slaves faced inhuman violence, relentless working conditions, with no identity as a human, far from rights of any kind. The lives of slaves naturally were at extreme contrast with the lives of their masters or the land owners. It began around the 8th century in Middle Europe and lasted till the 15th century. Estates were legally defined, along with the rights, duties, and privileges. The hierarchy that revolved around the estate ownership had three levels. Feudal lords or nobility were owners of estates and gave military service to the Crown. They also legally owned the serfs. Knights or vassals protected the lands as tenants. Serfs or the peasants constituted the lowest stratum. They had to give a part of their produce to the upper strata. The concept of caste is linked with ethnicity or race and is believed to have religious sanction. Existing originally on the basis of occupational division as given by the varna system during the Ancient Indian Vedic period, it has been associated with the birth of an individual in the particular caste. It is associated with the principle of endogamy and heredity that define the lifestyle of the people within the same caste or sub-caste. There are four main castes: Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra. These refer to further

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divisions or communities existing in each caste. The division most common across the world is the class system. It is based on economic factors and is related to the concept of status. Marxist theory explains the opposing classes of the society as the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Marxist concept with reference to capitalism consists of two classes: Class, however, still is defined based on the ownership of crucial resources economic, or political and decides the status of an individual or a group.

Characteristics of Social Stratification

1. Stratification is applicable to nearly all human civilizations of the past and present. Organization of a community brings along an ordered structure that does not come without a hierarchy. The division of society is thus, a feature typical to the nature or behavior of humans as a combined group. It is a consequence of the structural differences that define each individual as a part of the whole. Differentiating between men and women is a very intrinsic feature of all kinds of stratification. Women are treated differently from men with respect to their rights and duties in patriarchal societies. The kind of exposure to the world outside home, and the degree of independence they have depends upon the belief systems and culture of a society. Also, women belonging to different strata within the same society follow different norms. So, gender assumes a very dynamic role in shaping the characteristics of a given strata, irrespective of the stratification systems and the cultural differences within. The benefits and opportunities that individuals get are not the same for everyone as an equal member of the society. Different rewards and remuneration itself marks differences in who gets what and how easily. Status and prestige are two facets of any stratified society that establish inequality among its members. The rich and wealthy enjoy many perks and privileges. The intellectuals earn reverence due to their talent. Higher social position in the hierarchy achieved by fair or unfair means tends unequal treatment to individuals. Surplus wealth or resources left with individuals become the source of any further economic order or stratification. The lower base of the pyramid is associated with poverty and maximum numbers. Despite several basis to categorize masses, wealth or income of the community is the only criterion that has survived ever since the times of barter exchange to the current times of paper currency. Thus, this forms an objective stratification that generates statistics about the entire population. Whether an individual can move across different strata of a society decides the social mobility. If a common factory laborer makes his way to the top management of the industry, his status changes, showing an upward mobility. Systems of stratification are classified into open or closed systems depending on their allowance of such mobility. The caste system of India does not permit a person to switch between the vertical strata or caste structure that is an ascribed status across the social hierarchy, thus making it a closed system. Class system, on the contrary, is an open system which allows vertical and horizontal mobility. Status can be either achieved or ascribed. Ascriptive process define the social standing or even the lifestyle of the individual. Though traditionally it is not unusual, in modern societies, social status or position is to be believed to be acquired by means of achievements and conduct.

Functionalist View or the Davis-Moore Hypothesis

In sociology, the functionalist perspective structural functionalism is attributed to Herbert Spencer. It maintains that society is a sum of different parts of the system, working to run the whole system. It draws parallels from the biological concept of human body as a whole and the organs as its parts. Functionalists believe social stratification is necessary for the functioning and stability of a society. Moore in , claims that unequal distribution of rewards serves a purpose in society. In fact, inequality and hierarchy is beneficial. The functionalists believe that there are certain functions like cleaning and maintenance works, which can be carried out by anybody, or many people. However, there are certain jobs that can be done only by a few members of society, and thus are highly paid for, as a motivating factor for those few. Contribution of the talented and best qualified individuals is very essential to society, and thus, they are encouraged by better rewards and higher pay. There are several arguments against this perspective, as inequality or hierarchy is not always observed to be beneficial to society, nor is it rational.

Examples of Social Stratification

1. In developed economies, societies are classified into three broad categories. It refers to people who are uneducated, either unemployed, or with low levels of income. Those below the poverty line struggle even for basic necessities like food and shelter. The majority of the population known as the white collar workers constitute the middle class. They lie between the rich and the poor. They

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have dignified jobs and a standard, honorable lifestyle. The wealthy or high income groups and individuals are known as the upper class of society.

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Chapter 5 : Social Stratification: Types, Characteristics, and Examples

Social Classes in the United States. Socioeconomic status is just a way of describing the stratification system of the United States. The class system, also imperfect in classifying all Americans, nonetheless offers a general understanding of American social stratification.

Hunting and gathering societies had no social stratification because all members had to produce food and share it. Stratification arose with job specialization that began in pastoral and horticulture societies. Not everyone in the society needed to be involved in food production. Rise of industrialized societies led to increased stratification as the difference between the haves and the have-nots grew. Some improvement in working conditions created a middle class. New technologies created a new social group, skilled workers. The new technology used in postindustrial societies contributed to increased worldwide stratification. Historical Stratification Categories Historical stratification systems include slavery, the estate system, and indentured servitude. Slavery is a system of stratification in which one person owns another. The estate system, prevalent in the Middle Ages, was a three-tiered system composed of the nobility, clergy, and commoners. Some commoners sought new opportunities in the New World and agreed to indentured servitude to get there. Unlike slavery, in which the enslaved have no choice, indentured servants agree to sell their bodies or labor to someone for a specified period of time. Modern Stratification Systems Slavery still exists as a stratification system. The caste system is based on ascribed status, which is a condition of birth, and allows little or no possibility for mobility. People in castes must marry within their own caste. This practice is known as endogamy. Social mobility is an important characteristic of the class system, which is based on achieved status. The United States has a class system of stratification. Theories of Stratification Karl Marx argued that there were only two classes of people in any capitalist society: He believed that the proletariat would eventually realize they were being exploited by the bourgeoisie and would rise up in revolution. Power and prestige were equally important. Kingsley Davis and Wilbert Moore believed that stratification served an important function for society. It provided greater rewards to people willing to take more complex jobs. Melvin Tumin disagreed, arguing that all societies are not meritocracies, systems of stratification in which positions are given according to individual merit. These categories are not always reliable predictors of social class. The upper class, which makes up about one percent of the U. The category called new money includes rich people whose wealth is relatively new. This class makes up about 15 percent of the population. The middle class, about 34 percent of the population, includes people who work at professional or white-collar jobs. Members of the working class, about 30 percent of the population, often work at blue-collar jobs. The working poor are people who have little to no job security and who, despite working two or more jobs, barely earn enough money to survive. People at the poverty level lack the means to meet their basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter. Poverty in America A staggering number of Americans currently live below the poverty level. Many people living in poverty are women. The feminization of poverty refers to the increasing number of female-headed households living at or below the poverty level. William Julius Wilson found that poverty is concentrated in inner cities and the rural South. Poverty exacts a high emotional and physical toll on individuals. According to Oscar Lewis, poor people do not learn the norms and values that can help them improve their circumstances, hence they get trapped in a culture of poverty. Global Stratification Societies are stratified in relation to one another. The three broad categories of global stratification are most-industrialized nations, industrializing nations, and least-industrialized nations. Each category differs in wealth, power, and prestige. Theories of global stratification include colonialism, world system theory, neocolonialism, and multinational corporations. Colonialism occurs when a powerful country invades a weaker country in order to exploit its resources. Multinational corporations help maintain the global stratification system.

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Chapter 6 : Social Inequality Essay | www.nxgvision.com

Sociologists use the term social stratification to describe the system of social standing. Social stratification refers to a society's categorization of its people into rankings of socioeconomic tiers based on factors like wealth, income, race, education, and power.

John Gowdy writes, "Assumptions about human behaviour that members of market societies believe to be universal, that humans are naturally competitive and acquisitive, and that social stratification is natural, do not apply to many hunter-gatherer peoples. Original affluent society Anthropologists identify egalitarian cultures as " kinship -oriented," because they appear to value social harmony more than wealth or status. These cultures are contrasted with economically oriented cultures including states in which status and material wealth are prized, and stratification, competition, and conflict are common. Kinship-oriented cultures actively work to prevent social hierarchies from developing because they believe that such stratification could lead to conflict and instability. A good example is given by Richard Borshay Lee in his account of the Khoisan , who practice "insulting the meat. The meat itself is then distributed evenly among the entire social group, rather than kept by the hunter. The level of teasing is proportional to the size of the kill. Lee found this out when he purchased an entire cow as a gift for the group he was living with, and was teased for weeks afterward about it since obtaining that much meat could be interpreted as showing off. According to David H. Turner , in this arrangement, every person is expected to give everything of any resource they have to any other person who needs or lacks it at the time. This has the benefit of largely eliminating social problems like theft and relative poverty. While many such variables cut across time and place, the relative weight placed on each variable and specific combinations of these variables will differ from place to place over time. One task of research is to identify accurate mathematical models that explain how these many variables combine to produce stratification in a given society. Grusky provides a good overview of the historical development of sociological theories of social stratification and a summary of contemporary theories and research in this field. In general, sociologists recognize that there are no "pure" economic variables, as social factors are integral to economic value. However, the variables posited to affect social stratification can be loosely divided into economic and other social factors. Economic inequality Strictly quantitative economic variables are more useful to describing social stratification than explaining how social stratification is constituted or maintained. Income is the most common variable used to describe stratification and associated economic inequality in a society. Social status Social variables, both quantitative and qualitative , typically provide the most explanatory power in causal research regarding social stratification, either as independent variables or as intervening variables. Three important social variables include gender , race , and ethnicity , which, at the least, have an intervening effect on social status and stratification in most places throughout the world. Some of these variables may have both causal and intervening effects on social status and stratification. For example, absolute age may cause a low income if one is too young or too old to perform productive work. The social perception of age and its role in the workplace, which may lead to ageism , typically has an intervening effect on employment and income. Social scientists are sometimes interested in quantifying the degree of economic stratification between different social categories, such as men and women, or workers with different levels of education. An index of stratification has been recently proposed by Zhou for this purpose. Gender inequality Gender is one of the most pervasive and prevalent social characteristics which people use to make social distinctions between individuals. Gender distinctions are found in economic-, kinship- and caste-based stratification systems. Entire societies may be classified by social scientists according to the rights and privileges afforded to men or women, especially those associated with ownership and inheritance of property. Sex- and gender-based division of labor is historically found in the annals of most societies and such divisions increased with the advent of industrialization. Other differences in employment between men and women lead to an overall gender-based pay-gap in many societies, where women as a category earn less than men due to

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the types of jobs which women are offered and take, as well as to differences in the number of hours worked by women. Racism Racism consists of both prejudice and discrimination based in social perceptions of observable biological differences between peoples. It often takes the form of social actions , practices or beliefs, or political systems in which different races are perceived to be ranked as inherently superior or inferior to each other, based on presumed shared inheritable traits, abilities, or qualities. In a given society, those who share racial characteristics socially perceived as undesirable are typically under-represented in positions of social power, i. Minority members in such a society are often subjected to discriminatory actions resulting from majority policies, including assimilation , exclusion , oppression , expulsion , and extermination. For example, members associated with a particular race may be assigned a slave status , a form of oppression in which the majority refuses to grant basic rights to a minority that are granted to other members of the society. More covert racism , such as that which many scholars posit is practiced in more contemporary societies, is socially hidden and less easily detectable. Covert racism often feeds into stratification systems as an intervening variable affecting income, educational opportunities, and housing. Both overt and covert racism can take the form of structural inequality in a society in which racism has become institutionalized. Ethnocentricity Ethnic prejudice and discrimination operate much the same as do racial prejudice and discrimination in society. In fact, only recently have scholars begun to differentiate race and ethnicity; historically, the two were considered to be identical or closely related. With the scientific development of genetics and the human genome as fields of study, most scholars now recognize that race is socially defined on the basis of biologically determined characteristics that can be observed within a society while ethnicity is defined on the basis of culturally learned behavior. Ethnic identification can include shared cultural heritage such as language and dialect , symbolic systems , religion , mythology and cuisine. As with race, ethnic categories of persons may be socially defined as minority categories whose members are under-represented in positions of social power. As such, ethnic categories of persons can be subject to the same types of majority policies. Whether ethnicity feeds into a stratification system as a direct, causal factor or as an intervening variable may depend on the level of ethnocentrism within each of the various ethnic populations in a society, the amount of conflict over scarce resources, and the relative social power held within each ethnic category. World-systems theory and Dependency theory The world and the pace of social change today are very different than in the time of Karl Marx, Max Weber, or even C. Globalizing forces lead to rapid international integration arising from the interchange of world views , products, ideas, and other aspects of culture. Rather than having separate national economies, nations are considered as participating in this world economy. The world economy manifests a global division of labor with three overarching classes: Core nations primarily own and control the major means of production in the world and perform the higher-level production tasks and provide international financial services. Semiperipheral nations are midway between the core and periphery. They tend to be countries moving towards industrialization and more diversified economies. Furthermore, core nations are usually able to purchase raw materials and other goods from noncore nations at low prices, while demanding higher prices for their exports to noncore nations. Today we have the means to gather and analyze data from economies across the globe. Although many societies worldwide have made great strides toward more equality between differing geographic regions, in terms of the standard of living and life chances afforded to their peoples, we still find large gaps between the wealthiest and the poorest within a nation and between the wealthiest and poorest nations of the world.

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Chapter 7 : Social stratification - Wikipedia

Social stratification is a kind of social differentiation whereby a society groups people into socioeconomic strata, based upon their occupation and income, wealth and social status, or derived power (social and political).

Wright & Erik O. Some materials are available over the internet. Click on the appropriate link within the syllabus to reach them. What do we want to ask about stratification, inequality, classes, and the like? What are the goals of this field? Classes and inequality over time. How are we to conceive the problems of studying classes and inequality as historical entities? Wrong, "Social Inequality without Stratification. The class analysis of Karl Marx. The starting point for everything written about class, even if by omission. See Marx Discussion Questions for orienting questions that will guide us in our class discussion. Marx, The Marx-Engels Reader. Selections [Marxist ideas distilled through a critical and empirical sociological analysis] IV. The class analysis of Max Weber. See Weber Discussion Questions for orienting questions that will guide us in our class discussion. Political domination and alliances based on inequality. Rule through alliances based on status or between classes. Conflict over authority or goods? Bottomore, Elites and Society. Djilas, The New Class. Classical and Contemporary Debates, pp. University of California Press, How do the ways we think, see, and interact become organized by status and social location and, in turn, organize us into distinctive identities? Smith, "Beliefs About Stratification", Ann. Robinson and M Garnier, "Class Reproduction Functionalist analyses of stratification. Wrong, "Functional Theory of Stratification: Social mobility and status attainment research, Part 1. The study of who gets where, what, and why. Zetterberg, "A Theory of Social Mobility. Reflections after Twenty-five Years. Caste, race, and slavery in stratification systems: How do racial and economic inequality depend on each other? Wilson, The Declining Significance of Race. Racial and Ethnic Inequality, , , Racial and Ethnic Inequality, , remaining material. Race, Wealth and Social Policy in America. Jacobsen, Whiteness of a Different Color. Winant, Racial formation in the United States. Social mobility and status attainment research, Part 2. Jencks, "Structural versus Individual Explanations for Inequality. The direct relationship of classes. A recent attempt at integrating ideas.

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Chapter 8 : Content Pages of the Encyclopedia of Religion and Social Science

Social-Conflict Approach in regards to Social Stratification. This argues that stratification provides some people with advantages over others. Karl Marx was the leader of Class Conflict.

Essay This essay has been submitted by a student. This is not an example of the work written by our professional essay writers. Interview Assignment on Social Inequality Having gone through what social inequality is, I was assigned to carry out an interview with one of the victims of social inequality. This interview was meant to give me a deeper understanding on the form of social inequality under investigation. I decided to carry out an investigation on class inequality since this form of inequality cuts across gender and race. Generally, society can be stratified into different classes ranging from upper, middle and lower. On my side, am privileged to belong to the middle class, the most popular class in most societies. Taking this into consideration, I decided that my interviewee should either be from the upper or lower classes, so that I can get to understand this form of social inequality from another perspective. So I settled for someone from the lower class as this is the class which is viewed to have many challenges in society. My interviewee and I belonged to the same gender and age bracket, thus this made him very comfortable to share his experience with me. The interview was recorded. Social inequality can be defined as a condition where people are exposed to unequal opportunities depending on their social positions in a society. However, it should be clear that the stratification is a societal characteristic, not individual, and can be carried over generations. There are many systems of social stratification such as slavery, caste system and the class system. Sociologically, the class system is referred to as the socioeconomic status, because it combines both social and economic factors. As I asked my questions, my interviewee was easy and ready to share his experience with me. Since he belonged to the lower class, he told me he had to work extra harder to overcome many obstacles in order to change his socioeconomic status. According to Marx, there are two main classes in society: The capitalists owned the means of production while the workers sold their labor to earn a living. Marx used his theory to describe a capitalist society where individuals are only concerned about their own success. When incorporating this theory into society, the capitalists are found at the upper class with full possession of wealth, power and prestige. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the middle class have greater access to opportunities as compared to the lower class. Luckily, an individual is not condemned to stay in the socioeconomic status they are born in forever as they can move out of it through things such as education or marriage. Moving from one societal class to the other is termed as social mobility. They are taken to the best schools and hospitals in the world, and they will never sleep hungry. As such, they tend to stay comfortable and in most cases are nurtured in a way to maintain the status quo. On the contrary, those of the lower classes in society have to work extra harder so as to get access to such opportunities. For instance, a child of the lower class can only get access to the best schools if they perform exceptionally well in school and are awarded a scholarship. Critics though have come out to dispute claims that anyone can attain material success if they work hard simply because society does not expose us to equal opportunities. Therefore, it is only fair if those in governance can make grounds favorable for the less privileged in society to compete equally with the privileged. I was really proud of my interviewee because he did not seem to be weighed down with his social status. He vividly stated that though he was born into the lowest ranking class in society, his aim was to change the status quo. From this I learnt that attitude plays a very important role when it comes to success or failure of individuals in society. There are those who pity themselves and accept to stay in their status quo though unpleasant, and there are those who fight against all odds to better themselves. Need a paper on the same topic? We will write it for you from scratch! Order now Request Removal If you are the original writer of this essay and no longer wish to have the essay published on the SpeedyPaper website then click on link below to request removal: Request the removal of this essay People also read.

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Chapter 9 : SparkNotes: Social Stratification and Inequality: Social Classes in the United States

Today's correlation between poverty and a host of social ills has led policymakers to treat them almost interchangeably and emphasize economic relief. But the correlation is historically.

Cape Verde is geographically and economically isolated from the rest of the world. Most of the population in Cape Verde collects water at public water channels. Corn is crushed with pestle and mortar in Cape Verde. Stratification affects our everyday lives. Inequality means people have unequal access to scarce and valued resources in society. These resources might be economic or political, such as health care, education, jobs, property and land ownership, housing, and ability to influence government policy. Statistics on United States and global inequality are widespread and alarming. Why does it continue? Do we justify inequality? Can we eliminate inequality? Can we make a society in which people are equal? Before answering these complex questions, we will broadly define socioeconomic status and social class in America. The chapter then turns to dominant theories on stratification, and explores class, race, and gender inequality in more detail. We look at how capitalism is an important context in inequality. We end with consequences of inequality and theories explaining global inequality. Socioeconomic Status[edit] Building on the ideas of Max Weber, who saw three main dimensions of stratification class, status, and party , contemporary sociologists often define stratification in terms of socioeconomic status or SES. There are a variety of ways to measure SES, including educational attainment, income, wealth, and occupational prestige. These measures reflect three characteristics of individuals: Legitimate power, power given to individuals willingly by others, is called authority. Illegitimate power, power taken by force or the threat of force, is called coercion. Property goes beyond income as a measure of social class as it reflects the accumulated wealth e. Property is a better overall measure of social class than income as many individuals who are considered wealthy actually have very small incomes. Occupations like physicians or lawyers tend to have more prestige associated with them than occupations like bartender or janitor. These three indicators tend to go hand-in-hand or lead to each other, such as a Supreme Court justice who is usually wealthy, enjoys a great deal of prestige, and exercises significant power. In some cases, however, a person ranks differently on these indicators, such as funeral directors. Their prestige is fairly low, but most have higher incomes than college professors, who are among the most educated people in America and have high prestige. In Nickel and Dimed: On Not Getting by in America, Barbara Ehrenreich describes her experience of working a series of low-wage jobs in and trying to survive on her wages. In addition to trying to survive on her wages, she described how working overtime without pay was the custom at Wal-Mart. Managers informed workers to punch out of the time clock and to begin some additional work without pay. The gap between the wealth of white families and the wealth of African-American families and Hispanics has also increased. The average wealth of a white family in was 20 times greater than that of the average black family, and 18 times greater than the average Hispanic family. Here, it might be useful to describe a few characteristics of these societies. People grew and collected their food for all of their needs. There was very little trading between the groups and there were not many inequalities between groups. There was not a surplus of goods. Everyone possessed basically the same as everyone else. The division of labor was small. People did almost the same jobs as each other. Food gathering and food production was the focus of work. For the first time, people had more time to do other work besides producing food, such as making leather and making weapons and other special skills. This new division of labor led to surplus of goods. The groups then traded with each other. This led to inequality because some people accumulated more possessions than others. Fast forward many millennia later to just before Industrialization began. In the 14th, 15th, and 16th centuries, there was collectivity in the space and land in Europe. Life was brutal and harsh, but there was a joint and shared responsibility in the way people lived their lives and went about their work. People farmed land in a collective way because they saw it as something for everyone to take care of and for everyone to enjoy the fruits of their labor. Jean-Jacques Rousseau linked private property with inequality in his book,

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Discourse on Inequality. Collective land and space, once shared by all, began to be divided up into private takings and private ownership and this continues today. Land, oceans, and air, once shared by everyone in the world, began being bought and sold like products in a store. The great land masses of the world were reduced to private property. Laws and regulations were created that allowed a country to claim a certain amount of water for exploitation. Air was divided into air corridors that were bought and sold for commercial traffic for airplanes. Today, the right to private property is an important value in most societies. With deregulation, privatization, and free trade, we continue to see a private taking and private ownership of entities once shared by everyone. Their thinking helped people consider that inequality was the result of the actions and intentions of social institutions and specific groups and not the will of God. Even so, the question of the origin of inequality remains today in addition to why inequality continues. The Persistence of Inequality[edit] Sociologist Joel Charon [11] offers a few reasons why inequality continues in society. His arguments reflect social reproduction theory, which focuses on the roles of institutions and cultures in the perpetuation of inequality and the process by which the social class structure is maintained. First, the rich and powerful protect the system of inequality. They are typically the owners of the means of production factories, machinery, land, transportation and have the resources to protect themselves and their positions. This control is heightened in societies with advanced technology as more developed technology facilitates the ability of the wealthy to pass on their wealth to their offspring. But in less developed economies - like hunter-gatherer or pastoralist - the transmission of wealth is far more difficult as it involves the physical transferring of goods. Thus, technology has the potential to substantially heighten inequality by facilitating the intergenerational transmission of wealth. Karl Marx argued that the rich and powerful have control over the means of production, which is economic power, and they also have great influence on government power, including the rules governments follow, the people who work for the government, and the laws governments make. The rich and powerful also have control over the media, the schools, the courts, and many other parts of society and they support institutions religion, economy, and education that favor them. Inequality continues because those at the top protect their positions and use their power to influence other parts of society. Research shows that Americans believe in equality. Research also shows that Americans view inequality as justified. The poor are poor because they are lazy or irresponsible or unmotivated. These are ideologies that protect the system of inequality. These ideologies legitimize the position of the rich and powerful and explain and justify the position of the poor. In the United States, important cultural values are taught early on which support the system of inequality. People accept as truth these beliefs: The rich and powerful socialize their children to expect wealth and power. Parents, teachers, and friends show us our position in society and teach us to expect that same level. The worst schools were located in areas where median home prices were very low. This illustrates how inequality and stratification get passed on from generation to generation, as children raised in wealthy families get the best education. Ivy League colleges, private country clubs, debutante balls a formal introduction and presentation of young women to society and the social register a book listing the most important and famous American families are ways that the wealthy maintain their cohesion and pass on their prestigious positions to their children. Elementary and high schools in the U. Working-class students learn obedience; upper-middle class students learn leadership and creativity. Finally, police, courts, and prisons work together to protect the system of inequality. Research has shown that the criminal justice system in the U. Given all of these ways inequality is perpetuated in a society, is it at all possible to eliminate it? The previous section shows it is embedded in society in many ways, but if the conditions that generate social inequality are conscious and intentional creations of human actions, they can be changed. We will examine this complex issue in the next section. Two classic approaches to stratification provide interesting insights into this phenomenon, structural-functionalism and conflict theories. Structural-Functionalism on Stratification[edit] The structural-functional approach to stratification asks the same question that it does of the other components of society: What function or purpose does it serve? Stratification and inequalities are inevitable and beneficial to society. The layers sorting of unequal people. The layering is useful because it ensures that

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the best people are at the top and those who are less worthy are further down the pyramid and therefore have less power and are given fewer rewards than the high quality people at the top. Inequality ensures that the most functionally important jobs are filled by the best qualified people. In other words, it makes sense for the CEO of a company whose position is more important functionally to make more money than a janitor working for the same company. Garbage collectors are important to public sanitation, but do not need to be rewarded highly, because little training or talent is required to perform their job. Doctors should be rewarded highly, because great training is required to do their job. It is logical that society must offer greater rewards e. First, it is difficult to determine the functional importance of any job, as the accompanying specialization and inter-dependence make every position necessary to the overall operation.