

Chapter 7:

What is Social Stratification?

➤ **Social stratification**—a system in which groups of people are divided into layers according to their relative **power, property, and prestige**.

➤ Every society stratifies its members.

➤ It is a way of ranking large groups of people

Types of Stratification:

What is the difference between Slavery and Caste Systems?

➤ **Slavery**—ownership of some people by others.

➤ Based on racism, but on debt, crime, war, and racism.

➤ In some cases, slavery was temporary.

➤ **Caste system**—status is determined by birth and is life long.

➤ Boundaries between castes remain strong.

➤ They practice **endogamy** (marriage within their own group).

How Is the U.S. Stratified Today?

How Do Sociologists See the U.S. Stratified Today?

➤ A **class system**—an open system based on money or material possessions.

➤ One's status changes according to what one **achieves**.

➤ There are **fluid boundaries**.

➤ **Social mobility** is possible.

What has caused us to have social classes in the U.S. today?

Both Karl Marx and Max Weber had explanations.

Karl Marx explained that it is **economics** that has caused the class system

Economics has created two groups:

- **bourgeoisie** (owners of means of production)
- **proletariat** (workers)

Marx predicted:

- the rich would get richer
- the workers would develop a **class conscienceness** and become aware of the rich taking advantage of them.
- **revolution** would ensue and **communism** would replace capitalism

Marx explained:

"The proletarians of the world have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to gain. Workers of the world, unite!"

Karl Marx's view of capitalism:

"Catch a man a fish, and you can sell it to him. Teach a man to fish, and you ruin a wonderful business opportunity."

Karl Marx's view of communism:

"From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs."

What do you see as the strengths of:

communism?
Capitalism?

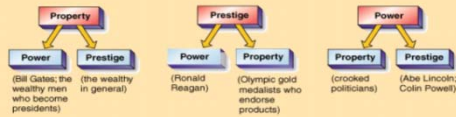
What are their weaknesses?

Max Weber argued that ownership and control are only part of the picture.

Social Class is made of three components. Those in the upper class have all three:

Prestige
Power
Property

► Weber's Three Components of Social Class:
Interrelationships Among Them



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Do We Need to have Stratification?

How would you guess **functional theorists** view social stratification?

How Do **Functionalists** View Social Stratification

- Society's positions **must be filled**.
- Some positions are **more important** than others.
- The more important positions are filled by **qualified people**.
- To attract the most qualified people **greater rewards** are offered

How do **conflict theorists** view social stratification?

Conflict Theorists

- No society can exist unless it is **organized**.
- **Leadership** means inequalities of power.
- **Human nature** is self-centered so there will be injustices in how the power is divided and used.

How do those with **power, prestige, and property** maintain stratification?

(that is, maintain their power, prestige, and property?)

(How was it maintained 1000 years ago? How does this compare to today?)

Means of Control

- **By force**—least effective.
- **Politically**—use laws and regulations (dictators)
- **Controlling ideas**
 - The divine right of kings—the king's authority comes directly from God.
 - false class conscienceness

Means of Control

- **Controlling information**
 - Control the media
 - Selectively releasing or withholding information (e.g. "in the interest of national security")
- **Using new, cutting-edge technologies**
- **Encouraging feuds between differing groups of non-elites**

How Do Those Not In Power Fight Back?

How Do Those Not In Power Fight Back?

- Politically —if in democratic country
- Judicial system
- Terrorism
- Using new, cutting-edge technologies

► Global Stratification: Income* of the World's Nations



*Income is the country's per capita gross national product measured in U.S. dollars. Since some trials vary widely from year to year, they must be taken as approximate.

Sources: Haub and Cornelius 1999 (except Famighetti 1999 for Afghanistan, Bahrain, Cuba, Iceland, Iraq, Libya, Luxembourg, North Korea, Oman, Qatar, Somalia, Taiwan, and the United Arab Emirates).

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How Did Nations Become Stratified?

World Systems Theory

Industrialization led to four groups of nations:

- core**—those that industrialized first
- semiperiphery**—grew dependent on trade with core
- periphery**—less developed, sold cash crops to core (eastern Europe)
- external area**—left out of industrialization (parts of Africa, Asia)

"Globalization of capitalism"—interdependence—a single change in the world affects the whole world

How Did Nations Become Stratified?

- **Colonialism Theory** —the process by which one nation took over another nation.
- Done for the purpose of **exploitation**.

- **Dependency Theory**—stresses how the Least Industrialized Nations grew dependent on the Most Industrialized Nations.

- **Culture of Poverty**—some nations are crippled by a way of life that perpetuates poverty.

Why do the same countries
remain poor over time?

➤ **Neocolonialism**—the economic and political dominance over the Least Industrialized Nations by the Most Industrialized Nations.

➤ **Multinational Corporations** —help to maintain global dominance.

➤ **Lack of Technology**

The End