Social Class and Family Relationships

- Ascribed Statuses – Statuses a person is born with, such as his or her sex, race and ethnic background, and social class

Discussion: Social Class & Family Relationships

- Do you believe Americans are uncomfortable discussing social class?
- What social class would you describe for your family or yourself? What factors would you consider in this determination?
- To which social class level do you aspire? How will you achieve it? What factors (ascribed or achieved) may help or hinder you in this goal?
Life Experiences Influenced by Class Standing

- Health status, health insurance, and access to health care
- Gender expectations
- Values that parents socialize in their children
- How parents interact with their children
  - The Home Observation of the Measurement of the Environment (HOME)
- College Experience
- Dating and premarital sexual experiences
- Likelihood of and age at first marriage
- Income and spending patterns
- Hobbies and pastimes
- Stress and coping

What is Social Stratification?

- Social Stratification – The hierarchical ranking of people within a society on the basis of specific coveted resources, such as income and wealth
- Meritocracy – A system in which economic and social rewards such as income, occupation, or prestige are obtained on individual merit rather than inheritance

Caste and Class Systems in a Comparative Perspective

- Caste System – A system of social stratification that is based upon ascribed characteristics one is born with, such as race, ethnicity, or family lineage
- Social Mobility – Movement in the stratification system based on individual effort or achievement
- Social Class - A system of social stratification that is based both on ascribed statuses and individual achievements
Conceptualizations of Class

- Karl Marx
  - Bourgeoisie – The capitalist class that owns the means of production
  - Proletariat – Individuals who must sell their labor to the owners in order to earn enough money to survive

- Max Weber
  - Wealth – The value of all of a person’s or a family’s economic assets, including income, real estate, stocks, bonds, and other forms of economic worth, minus debt
  - Prestige – The esteem or respect a person is afforded
  - Power – The ability to achieve goals, wishes, and desires even in the face of opposition from others

Example: Social Class in Britain

Table 51 Rates of Selected Health Problems, Per 100,000 People, Great Britain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Class</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mortality rate</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coronary heart disease</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicide and undetermined injury</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lung cancer</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart disease</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe alone</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe with care</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe with care in the past 12 months, 1994</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Social Class in the United States

- Socioeconomic Status (SES) – A vague combination of age, occupation, and income

  - The Upper Class
    - Example: The Social Register, Class or Caste?
  - The Upper Middle Class
  - The Middle Class
  - The Working Class
  - The Working Poor
  - The Underclass

Social Mobility: Fact or Fiction?

Family Focus: How Class Matters: Health, Health Insurance, and Family Well-being
Health, Health Insurance, and Family Well-being

- Out-of-pocket Costs – The amount that individuals pay of their own money to receive health care
- Medicaid – A federally mandated health care financing program for the financially indigent who meet certain qualifications
- National Health Insurance – Insurance is viewed as a public good, like schools, police protection, and parks, available to all, and funded out of taxes and general revenues
- Mortality Rates – Death rates

Families in Poverty

- Cross-sectional Data – Data collected at only one point in time rather than following trends over time

What do we Mean by “Poor”?

- Poverty Line – The U.S. government’s official method of calculating how many people are poor and assessing how it change from year to year

Who is Poor?

Example: Making Ends Meet on a Poverty Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Characteristics</th>
<th>Percent of Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-64</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian Peace</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never Married</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married/Divorced</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Families in Poverty
Families in Poverty

- Comparative Studies
  - Relative Poverty – Some people lack basic resources relative to others in their society
    • Characteristic of most developed countries
  - Absolute Poverty – Lack of resources such as food, housing and clothing that is life threatening and commonplace
    • Characteristic of at least 60 low-income countries or half the world’s population
  - Example: “Nalim” in Bhutan

**Figure 5.3** Poverty Rates by Age 1970–2005

**Figure 5.4** Poverty Status of People by Race and Hispanic Origin 1976–2005
Causes of Poverty

- Individualism
- Social Structuralism
- Culture of Poverty
- Fatalism
Consequences of Poverty

- Consequences for Adults
- Consequences for Children
  - Physical Health
  - Children’s Mental Health, Adjustment, and Well-being
  - Academic and School Achievement

Family Resiliency

- Resiliency
  The capacity to rebound from adversity, misfortune, trauma, or other transitional crises and be strengthened and more resourceful
Family Resiliency

- Individual, Family, and Community Factors
  - Individual-level Protective Factors – Individual personality traits and dispositions that enhance resiliency
  - Family Protective Factors (FPF) – Characteristics or dynamics that shape the family’s ability to endure in the face of risk factors
  - Family Recovery Factors (FRF) – Assist families in “bouncing back” from a crisis situation
  - Community – Can include geographic space, social networks, and religious and faith-based fellowships that affect resiliency

Social Policy and Family Resilience

- Example: The Earned Income Tax Credit
  - A federal tax credit for low-income working families

What is Missing?
- Structural Conditions