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|  | | ***Chapter 8 - Assignment 1*** | |  |
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10 points

Provide the definition for the following concepts:

1. Ideology

An ideology is a set of ideas that:

* Explains reality
* Provides directions for behavior
* Expresses the interests of a particular group
* Ideologies work by controlling ideas and controlling information.

An ideology is also a set of cultural beliefs and practices that helps to maintain powerful social, economic, and political interests. It is a body of ideas reflecting the social needs and aspirations of an individual, group, class, or culture.

1. Social Mobility

Social mobility refers to the degree to which an individual or group's status is able to change in terms of position in the [social hierarchy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_hierarchy). It is the movement of individuals or groups from one position in a society’s stratification system to another.

1. Life Chances

The opportunities people have to provide themselves with material goods, positive living conditions, and favorable life experiences.

1. Ascribed Status

A social position assigned to a person by society without regard for the person’s unique talents or characteristics.

1. Assuming stratification, explain the relationship between the concepts:
   1. Ascribed Status and Life Chances

Life chances are reflected in measures such as housing, education, and health. If you occupy a higher position in a society it improves your life chances and brings greater access to social rewards. Ascribed Status is related to this because it is the status a person is assigned by society no matter what the person talents or characteristics are. One example would be if you are born rich, you will live in a nice house, have excellent education and most likely have good health. Even though you are born rich, and you are not really the one that is rich, you will be classified as rich by society. You will be treated better by society than someone in a lower ranking. Just like in the Titanic, the plans for evacuation were for women and children to go first. But, first and second class passengers were the ones looked at first because of their ascribed status and their life chances. It was all about status. The third class barely had anyone survive because they were of lower ranking, and they were not even given the option. Social class may be ascribed at birth, as with royalty or nobility, or with castes in Hindu societies. Generally, a person's position at birth is modified by his or her achievements. This is usually done through education, occupation, or income. Class cannot be measured directly. Instead, indicators of socioeconomic status, typically based on educational attainment, income, wealth, or occupation, are used. Most of the time people consider these to be ideal indicators of social class. It basically shows consistent associations with [health](http://www.answers.com/topic/class-structure) status, such that poorer or less educated people die younger and experience more illness and disability than richer or more educated people. These indicators each have strengths and shortcomings. Also, people's life chances are affected by their social class. The poor tend to devote high percentages of their household budgets, after paying rent, to food, yet generally have to settle for lower-quality food items and a restricted diet, as in limited choices due to the budget. Obesity is far more likely among persons of low income than persons in higher income groups. In more economically developed countries, the poor are more likely to experience food shortages or large options, and in less economically developed countries, the poor are more likely to experience low nutrient deficiency diseases.

* 1. Ideology and Social Mobility

Most societies allow some sort of social mobility or changes in people’s position in a system of social stratification. Social mobility can move upward, downward, or horizontal, it is universal, such as it can change. It relates to ideology because a capitalist society serves the interests of the ruling class. From a conflict perspective, dominiant ideology, society’s most powerful groups and instrituions control wealth and property. They also control the means of producing beliefs about realtiy through religion, education, and the media. Since Stratification is patterned social inequality, it is also the unequal distribution of societal resources. The differences occur in a wide-scale basis, with regularity, and along the lines of certain specific, identifiable characteristics: race, class, and gender. Social mobility is about a person’s position and ideology regards power in a society. Those that are not in a high social mobility will not be looked at as equal as a person with a high status.

Use an example to explain how each of the following concepts is related to stratification (not just the definition).

1. Ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism is when there is a tendency of a person or group of people to believe that their own race or ethnic group is the most superior or important of all groups of people. It is often believed that aspects of the group’s culture make it more important and the members of the group will show judgment based on behavior, customs, language and religion. Ethnicity and cultural identity are defined by these distinctions. Ethnocentrism can be a dangerous situation. It can distort communication between human beings and the world as a whole. This relates to stratification since stratification is all about the structured ranking of entire groups of people that perpetuates unequal economic rewards and power in a society. A great example is the movie, Slum Dog Millionaire. I had to shut it off, it was to brutal for me. The film makers only showed the slums of India, not India as an entire country. This movie helped create an image in our minds in this society, that India was a very under educated country lacking in industry, and culture. I see that I would never be interested in going to this country and wonder would our country really want to do business there? Would anyone in our country want to set up a business there? The movie focused on the social inequalities of the people living in the slums. Wherever the children ended up, it was in another slum where there was a different form of a society treating them badly.

1. Meritocracy

This is the social stratification based on personal merit. People in industrial societies develop a broad range of capabilities, stratification is based on “merit”, which is the job one does and how well one does it. Meritocracy diminishes the importance of families and other social groupings. In this situation, economic performance is not everything. Class systems in high income nations move toward meritocracy to promote productivity and efficiency but retain caste elements to maintain order and social cohesion. One example I have found on this pertains to people of color and women. This group keeps getting pushed down on the work force because they are seen as not productive or capable. The wages and living conditions, especially for African Americans are being driven down. The funding by the government that uses to offer assistance have been severely cut affecting people of color. Around the 1980’s Washington has spent trillions of dollars into banks but they did this throughout the imperialist financial system which has encouraged a degree of leverage that makes Las Vegas seem like nothing with all the money running through the casinos. The U.S. rulers have intervened continually in world markets to keep interest rates at historically low levels.5 In combination, these measures have kept banks in the United States with plenty of funds they needed to lend in order to boost their profit rates above those of competitors worldwide. The result: bank-driven “debt crises.” Among the earliest targets of the banks were working farmers in the United States and the governments of oppressed nations across the Americas, Africa, and Asia—who were increasingly pushed toward default, and, in the case of farmers, into foreclosure and they lost land that they worked every day.