Societal Structure

The formation of Intra-Cultural Identity
Basic Principles of Societal Structure

- **Social Structure** - A network of interrelated statuses and roles that guide human behavior.
  - **Status** - A socially defined position
    - Ex. Middle Class, Upper Class, Lower Class
  - **Role** - The behavior associated with a status
    - Ex. A doctor is suppose to act in certain ways while the expectations for a lawyer are different
Sociological Views of Stratification

• It is a characteristic of society, not simply a reflection of individual differences
  • Grouping based on perceived societal differences

• It persists over generations
  • Often your are born into social class

• It is universal but variable
  • Everyone is more or less involved in it but there are differences in how

• It involves not just inequality but beliefs
  • Sometimes stratification connects back to religion and deeper societal values
Leveling of Statuses

- **Ascribed status** is assigned according to qualities beyond a person’s control
  - Ex. Such as age
- **Achieved status** is acquired through a person’s direct efforts
  - Ex. Doctor
- **A Master status** is the one that plays the greatest role in a person’s life
  - It can be either ascribed or achieved
Explaining Roles

- **Role Expectations** are the socially determined behaviors (or **Role Sets**) expected of a person with a particular status. These do not always hold true and the **Role Performance** is the actual behaviors the individual actually does.

- **Role conflict** occurs when fulfilling the role expectations of one status interferes with a second status.

- **Role strain** occurs when a person has difficulty fulfilling the role of one status.

- **Role exit** is the process people go through to detach from a role that was previously central to their social identity.
Social Institutions

- **Social Institutions** are groups of statuses and roles that are organized to satisfy one or more of the basic needs of society
  - An individual will be a member of multiple social institutions which will all contribute to the individual’s socialization
    - Ex. Religion contributes morality
  - Institutions provide framework for individual including knowledge, social control, and support
Social Interaction

• Sociologist have determined that there are 5 main forms of interaction between members of a society
  • Exchange, Competition, Conflict, Cooperation, and Accommodation
    • Conflict and Competition encourage societal change, while Exchange, Cooperation, and Accommodation encourage societal unification and stability
Stabilizing Integration

**Exchange** occurs when people interact in an effort to receive a reward or a return for their actions.

- Main motivation is people expect something in return
  - Ex. Doing a favor in exchange for a favor in the future
- Exchange Theory says the only reason people do this is for self-interest

**Cooperation** occurs when two or more people or groups work together to achieve a goal that will benefit more than one person

- Ex. Two Individuals decide to work together on a project that is mutually beneficial

**Accommodation** is a state of balance between cooperation and conflict

- Sometimes requires compromise or negotiation where both sides need to give something up to achieve their goal
De-Stabilizing Integration

• **Competition** occurs when two or more people or groups oppose each other to achieve a goal that only one can attain.
  – Common in Western societies
  – Sometimes considered basis of capitalism and democracy
  – Can lead to psychological stress, a lack of cooperation, and conflict

• **Conflict** is the deliberate attempt to control a person by force, to oppose someone, or to harm another person.
  – Has few rules of accepted conduct
  – Can reinforce group boundaries and loyalty