Ethnic Stratification – The rank ordering of different ethnic groups in terms of their access to various social rewards (wealth, status, political influence, etc.) that are distributed unequally amongst society’s members.

* An ethnic stratification system refers to the set of social institutions (including the legal system, the job market, the education system, religious institutions, etc.) that legitimize and reproduce the existing ethnic hierarchy.
* Power underlies all forms of stratification

Power is the ability to alter the behavior of another person

* A has power over B if A can get B to do what A wants him or her to do, regardless of what B might want

Reproducing Inequality

* Stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination all play a role in maintaining ethnic stratification systems.
* Stereotypes – the pictures in our head that create a shorthand description of the members of a particular group
  + Is it rational for humans to form stereotypes based on group membership?
    - Yes! But why? – So we can predict the behavior of people we know ultimately nothing about.
  + They form a convenient, and usually effective, cognitive shortcut that allows us to behave correctly, and to predict other persons’ behaviors, in a variety of social situations.
  + If they are generally rational and effective, what’s the problem with ethnic stereotypes?
    - They tend to be over simplistic, over exaggerated, and in a negative connotation
    - They also tend to be resistant to change, even in the face of evidence that refutes the stereotype.
      * Selective Perception – The tendency to take note of cases that confirm our stereotypes, and to ignore cases that do not.
    - This is irrational; we should update our stereotypes based on new, non-confirmatory evidence, but often we do not.
* Prejudice – A judgement, based on the stereotypes we believe about a particular group, that is then applied categorically to all individual members of that group.
  + Ethnic prejudices are usually negative because of ethnocentrism
  + Ethnic prejudices are inflexible because we develop emotional attachments to the underlying stereotypes
* Discrimination – The behavioral counterpart to prejudice … actions that deny members of a particular group equal access to social rewards.
  + Varies by intensity
    - Verbal abuse
    - Denial of access to social resources
    - Acts of aggression targeting individuals or small groups
    - Acts of aggression targeting entire populations
  + By type and intent
    - Micro-discrimination
    - Macro-discrimination
    - Structural discrimination