**Chapter 10: The Architecture of Stratification: Social Class and Inequality**

Discussion Questions:

1. How were the distinctions between classes negotiated by the people in these articles?
2. What elements of stratification are addressed in these articles?
3. How do race and class function together or separately to create inequality?

Margaret K. Nelson & Rebecca Schutz

Day Care Differences and the Reproduction of Social Class

Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, Vol. 36, No. 3, 281-317 (2007)

<http://jce.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/36/3/281?ijkey=9KU5rysd7mjdY&keytype=ref&siteid=spjce>

**Abstract:**

Drawing on ethnographic research conducted in two day care centers—the Green Mountain Child Care Center in College Town, Vermont, and the Rocky Mountain Christian Day Care in Coalville, Wyoming—the authors demonstrate differences between centers serving different segments of the population. The authors rely on Annette Lareau's (2003) concepts of "concerted cultivation" and the "accomplishment of natural growth" as a way to describe these differences. The authors then reflect on the potential consequences of different styles of child care for the skills, attitudes, and orientations developed by young children.

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Carrie Yodanis

A Place in Town: Doing Class in a Coffee Shop

Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, Vol. 35, No. 3, 341-366 (2006)

<http://jce.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/35/3/341?ijkey=zDlvOSR2a9A86&keytype=ref&siteid=spjce>

**Abstract:**

How do socioeconomic differences take on meaning in our daily interactions? Each morning for a summer I joined nine women in a coffee shop in a small rural town. In this public setting, I observed how women "do" class. During interaction, women use work, family, and leisure-related behaviors, values, and tastes associated with socioeconomic positions in the process of class categorization. No set hierarchy results from this process, however. Rather, what emerges from the Coffee Shop is that doing class involves an ongoing struggle to situate one’s own class category higher, not lower, than the others.

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Margaret K Nelson

The Challenge of Self-sufficiency: Women on Welfare Redefining Independence

Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, Vol. 31, No. 5, 582-614 (2002)

<http://jce.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/31/5/582?ijkey=Xcvf6qx37K4GU&keytype=ref&siteid=spjce>

**Abstract:**

Drawing on interviews conducted with fifty-one single mothers in a rural state, this article explores how women who rely on state assistance sustain a belief in their own self-worth. The article first shows that single mothers hold firmly to the value of self-sufficiency. It then shows that they can hold to that value because they believe that their welfare reliance is different from that of other women and because they redefine independence to allow for acts that might normally be understood to challenge that norm. The findings are compared to those in other studies that cover some of the same issues. The discussion draws on three levels of context for interpreting the findings: the current discourse concerning single mothers and, more specifically, welfare recipients; the client stance that develops among those who deal with bureaucracies; and, finally, the interview situation itself.

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Miki Hasegawa

Economic Globalization and Homelessness in Japan

American Behavioral Scientist, Vol. 48, 989 – 1012 (2005)

<http://abs.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/48/8/989?ijkey=.RCa58G0xGHX6&keytype=ref&siteid=spabs>

**Abstract:**

This article traces the origins of the recent growth of homelessnessin Japan to the following three structural changes that occurredin the 1980s in association with economic globalization: (a)a shift from a manufacturing to a service economy, (b) urbanredevelopment, and (c) government policy shifts toward deregulationand privatization. The study indicates that a growing segmentof Japan’s low-income workforce has been subject to exclusionfrom employment, housing, and welfare.

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Dennis J. Condron

Social Class, School and Non-School Environments, and Black/White Inequalities in Children's Learning

*American Sociological Review, October 2009; vol. 74, 5: pp. 685-708.*

<http://asr.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/74/5/685?ijkey=g9YxjeyLiLnQg&keytype=ref&siteid=spasr>

**Abstract:**

As social and economic stratification between black and white Americans persists at the dawn of the twenty-first century, disparities in educational outcomes remain an especially formidable barrier. Recent research on the black/white achievement gap points to a perplexing pattern in this regard. Schools appear to exacerbate black/white disparities in learning while simultaneously slowing the growth of social class gaps. How might this occur? Using 1st grade data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Cohort (ECLS-K), I test—and find support for—the proposition that school factors play an elevated role in generating the black/white achievement gap while non-school factors primarily drive social class inequalities. These findings help explain why black/white achievement disparities grow mostly during the school year (when schools are in session and have their greatest impact on students' learning) while class gaps widen mostly during the summer (when school is out of session and non-school influences dominate). I conclude by discussing the implications for future research, especially as they pertain to what appears to be the most important contributor to the black/white achievement gap: school racial segregation.

Linneman, Thomas J.  
**The Rich and the Rest**

Contexts, Aug 2012; vol. 11: pp. 66-67

<http://ctx.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/11/3/66?ijkey=e0o5wj9PKhw.U&keytype=ref&siteid=spctx>

**Abstract**:

Using data from the General Social Survey, sociologist Thomas J. Linneman shows that conservatives and liberals increasingly differ regarding government action to reduce income inequality. Rich liberals support government action nearly as much as poor liberals, while among rich conservatives there is very little support for government action.

Yee, April  
**Degree by Default**

Contexts, Nov 2012; vol. 11: pp. 46-50

<http://ctx.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/11/4/46?ijkey=5PY9R/CPDgZEY&keytype=ref&siteid=spctx>**Abstract**:

In past generations, college was thought to be a site for higher learning in America. Yet April Yee's ethnographic research finds that few undergraduates are enrolling for the pursuit of knowledge anymore; instead, students are going to college simply because they believe they must have a degree to have a future in our society.

Lloyd, Richard

**East Nashville Skyline**

Ethnography, Mar 2011; vol. 12: pp. 114-145

<http://eth.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/12/1/114?ijkey=h.cgBvDx7F0zI&keytype=ref&siteid=speth>

**Abstract:**

This article examines a familiar urban dynamic -- gentrification -- in the less familiar setting of Nashville, Tennessee. In recent years, gentrification processes are accompanied by legitimating appeals to civic design trends and new cultural dynamics, particularly those associated with the New Urbanism and the promotion of creative'' city environments nurturing educated and culturally savvy residents. These discourses have increasingly come to define contemporary progressive'' urban policy, promoting values of diversity and cosmopolitanism while eliding standard concerns over displacement and the retrenchment of state services. Beginning with a dramatic street-level encounter between old and new styles of urban development, this account addresses the juxtaposition of a low density district targeted for redevelopment on Nashville's East Side with the obdurate presence of neighboring public housing projects, inscribing competing political and cultural imaginaries in the built environment. It contributes a detailed examination of the encounter between one-size-fits-all'' policy agendas with the spatial and historical specificity of a mid-South city, using thick description to unpack the sedimentary processes of transformation, and the contributions of state and non-state actors to new identity formation. This on-the-ground exploration further allows for a critical assessment of the progressive virtues of diversity and cosmopolitanism as they are manifest in the context of neoliberal state action and spatial restructuring.