

AS Level Sociology (9699)

Unit Three: Social Differentiation and Stratification

Recommended Prior Knowledge

This unit requires knowledge of the main sociological theories that were introduced in unit one; Marxist, functionalist, feminist, Weberian and post-modernist approaches will be examined in detail. The unit also builds on the understanding of socialisation (unit one) through discussing gender identity.

Context

Three of the core concepts in Sociology - class, gender, and ethnicity - provide the main focus for this unit. These concepts are particularly important for understanding the topics covered in units four, five, seven and eight. The unit will also be helpful in extending knowledge and understanding of the theories introduced in unit one.

Outline

The unit examines the underlying processes that shape the life chances of individuals and social groups. The patterns and extent of social inequality in contemporary societies is examined in relation to three main categories of social stratification: class, gender and ethnicity. Different theories and models of social stratification are studied in detail.

AO	Learning outcomes	Suggested Teaching activities	Learning resources
3.1	<p>Social Class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand theories and models of social class. Recognise changes in the class structure of contemporary societies. Discuss the nature, extent and significance of social mobility in different societies. Assess different explanations of poverty. 	<p>Introduce the main theories and models of social class. Discuss Marxist, Weberian, functionalist and post-modernist approaches to social stratification. Examine the relationship between occupation and social class.</p> <p>Identify the main changes in class structure in modern industrial societies since the nineteenth century. Consider the nature of class divisions today and whether such divisions have become blurred (or eroded altogether). Link the discussion to the concept of life chances and provide evidence about the impact of social class on employment opportunities, health, status and lifestyle.</p> <p>Use recent data to illustrate inequality in the distribution of income and wealth and reflect on the relationship between economic and political power. Develop the enquiry by introducing the concept of social mobility. Look at different ways of defining the concept and summarise the findings from recent studies of social mobility. Discuss the significance of the evidence about the nature and extent of social mobility for theorising class relationships today.</p>	<p>Barnard, A. et al, pp 67-76 for an introduction to the main theories and models of social class.</p> <p>Barnard, A. et al, pp77-91 reviews the main changes in class structure and considers the nature and extent of social mobility in modern industrial societies.</p> <p>Barnard, A. et al, pp101-110 examines inequality in relation to health and welfare provision.</p> <p>Barnard, A. et al, pp111-120 for a discussion of different explanations of poverty.</p>

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		<p>Look at different concepts of poverty and consider evidence about the extent of social deprivation in a range of developed and developing societies today. Assess different explanations of poverty, distinguishing between structural and cultural approaches.</p> <p>Class activity</p> <p>Invite the students to define the main features of a classless society. Make a checklist of these features and then discuss with the group the extent to which any modern industrial society can be said to be moving towards a state of classlessness. Highlight any features of these societies that are a barrier to the breakdown of class divisions. Introduce post-modernist ideas into the discussion.</p>	<p>For a range of helpful online materials on social stratification use the search facilities at the following web sites:</p> <p>www.socioweb.com</p> <p>www.sociology.org.uk</p> <p>www.mtsu.edu/~baustin</p> <p>A very useful site for the study of social mobility is:</p> <p>http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/</p> <p>For research on poverty linked to the famous Townsend studies, see:</p> <p>www.bris.ac.uk/poverty</p> <p>Another useful site for research on poverty, with an emphasis on the US, is:</p> <p>www.irp.wisc.edu</p> <p>A good source of materials on disability and stratification is:</p> <p>www.leeds.ac.uk/disability-studies</p>
3.2	<p>Gender</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distinguish between functionalist, Marxist and 	<p>Begin this part of the unit by distinguishing between the concepts of gender and sex, emphasising the socially constructed nature of gender versus the biological givens of sexual differences. Link this to a discussion of gender socialisation in the family, education,</p>	<p>Barnard, A. et al, pp92-95 for a discussion of different explanations of gender divisions. Gender and domestic labour is considered on pp136-139.</p>

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	<p>feminist approaches to gender differences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss masculinity and femininity as social constructs. • Identify gender differences in occupations and rewards and discuss changes in the social position of women. 	<p>employment and the mass media. Provide historical and/or cross-cultural examples to illustrate the socially constructed nature of the concepts of masculinity and femininity.</p> <p>Examine the relationship between gender and inequality in modern industrial societies. Consider evidence about gender inequality in the home and within the wider society. Assess the impact of equal opportunities' policies in relation to gender inequality. Conclude the unit by considering different approaches to theorising gender relationships, including the functionalist, Marxist and various feminist perspectives. Also ensure that the class understand the contribution of post-feminist and post-modernist writers on the subject of gender.</p> <p>Class activity</p> <p>Use sources such as magazines and films to reflect with the class on differences in the way that masculine and feminine identities are constructed in particular societies. Use examples to illustrate the cultural relativity of particular gender differences.</p> <p>Pose the basic question of why males and females are subject to different social expectations and ask the class to distinguish between biological, psychological and sociological explanations of gender divisions.</p>	<p>Gender socialisation and identity are discussed on pp37-39 and pp165-166.</p> <p>A useful database for gender studies is:</p> <p>www.uni-koeln.de/phil-fak/english/datenbank</p> <p>Further information about gender and social stratification can be found at:</p> <p>www.trinity.edu/~mkearl/family</p>
3.3	<p>Ethnicity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguish between race and ethnicity. • Recognise different forms of racism. • Discuss theories of racial discrimination and prejudice. • Identify patterns of racial and ethnic inequality in different 	<p>Begin this part of the unit by distinguishing between race and ethnicity. Discuss cultural, religious and national identity in relation to ethnicity. Consider different forms of racism and distinguish between discrimination and prejudice.</p> <p>Present evidence about the nature and extent of racial and ethnic inequality in employment, health, status, housing and lifestyles. Relate this evidence to different explanations (functionalist, Marxist, Weberian, etc.) of racial and ethnic discrimination.</p> <p>Consider examples of race relations policy and legislation against racial discrimination from different societies. Assess the effectiveness of these laws and policy initiatives in alleviating</p>	<p>Barnard, A. et al, pp95-98 examines race and ethnicity, with particular reference to inequality in housing and employment.</p> <p>Barnard, A. et al, pp50-51 provides material on ethnic subcultures.</p> <p>Haralambos, pp189-289, provides a more in-depth analysis of the relationships between race, ethnicity and nationality.</p>

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	<p>areas of society.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the impact of race relations policy and legislation against racial discrimination. 	<p>inequality and racial/ethnic tensions.</p> <p>Class activity</p> <p>Ask different members of the class to research the nature and extent of racial/ethnic discrimination in a society of their choice. Each student should then give a presentation of their evidence to the class. Follow this with a discussion of the similarities and differences between racial/ethnic inequality in different societies. Consider whether a general theory of racial/ethnic discrimination can be formulated.</p>	