

Social Inequality in a Global Age, Fifth Edition

CHAPTER 1

The Gordian Knot of Race, Class, and Gender

TEST ITEMS

Part I. Multiple-Choice Questions

1. A system of inequality that involves discrete levels of privilege is called
 - a. class consciousness
 - b. social stratification *
 - c. a Gordian knot
 - d. a gathering society
2. A society in which people belong to well-established social classes is referred to as:
 - a. egalitarian
 - b. ranked
 - c. stratified *
 - d. patriarchal
3. C. Wright Mills refers to the sociological imagination as:
 - a. a quality of mind that helps people place their personal troubles in a broader social and historical context *
 - b. the ability to think of interesting and informative sociological research
 - c. the ability to imagine oneself as someone else in a different social class or position
 - d. a literary device using fictional accounts to reflect social realities
4. Where a worker is placed on the “disassembly” line in the Robeson County slaughterhouse depends a great deal on
 - a. what type of educational credentials the worker has
 - b. the worker’s race, ethnicity, and gender *
 - c. the amount of seniority the worker has
 - d. whether the worker is a union member
5. Viewed sociologically, race and gender can be viewed as special types of
 - a. social status *
 - b. socialization
 - c. biological categories
 - d. behavior predictors
6. Some of the most egalitarian societies in human experience have been
 - a. reforming socialist societies
 - b. laissez-faire capitalist societies
 - c. hunting-and-gathering societies *
 - d. advanced agrarian societies

7. One would expect to find the least job specialization in a
 - a. hunting-and-gathering society *
 - b. horticultural society
 - c. industrial society
 - d. pastoral society
8. Some refer to hunter-gatherers as the original affluent society because they
 - a. often amassed great wealth
 - b. often made millions leasing their vast natural resources
 - c. often raided their farming neighbors
 - d. often worked no more than 20 hours per week *
9. The use of simple horticulture allowed the
 - a. establishment of permanent settlements *
 - b. invention of the wheel
 - c. penetration of arctic and desert environments
 - d. rise of the great world empires
10. Inequality grew in many simple horticultural societies with the greater prominence of
 - a. emperors and warrior-kings
 - b. money lenders and brokers
 - c. talented artisans
 - d. redistributors and big men *
11. The example of the Iroquois society illustrates that a number of horticultural societies:
 - a. enslaved women
 - b. were highly patriarchal
 - c. organized lineage and household around the women *
 - d. practiced human sacrifice
12. Inequality reached its extremes in many
 - a. advanced capitalist countries
 - b. hunting-and-gathering societies
 - c. agrarian societies *
 - d. horticultural barter societies
13. Many agrarian societies could be typified as:
 - a. patriarchal deference societies *
 - b. simple horticulturalists
 - c. highly matriarchal
 - d. very egalitarian societies
14. Maritime societies were often dominated by
 - a. traders and merchants *

- b. powerful kings
 - c. powerful mounted armies
 - d. priests and religious orders
15. Frontier societies have greater equality in their early stages in part because
- a. it is written into their constitutions
 - b. labor is scarce and valuable *
 - c. harmonious relations are often established between natives and newcomers
 - d. natural resources are scarce
16. Women's status in hunting-and-gathering societies is often:
- a. less subordinate (more equal) than in agricultural societies *
 - b. dominant and matriarchal
 - c. one of virtual slavery
 - d. more subordinate than in herding societies
17. The Kuznets curve implied that as societies fully industrialized, they would
- a. disintegrate
 - b. become more equal *
 - c. have less mobility
 - d. destroy their environment
18. Many of the world's most unequal current societies are in
- a. the advanced industrial world
 - b. the Pacific basin
 - c. Latin American industrializing agrarian societies *
 - d. small countries of Eastern Europe
19. Postindustrial economies are dominated by
- a. rival gangs
 - b. heavy industry
 - c. the service sector *
 - d. illegal immigrants
20. Most sociologists consider the dimensions of inequality to be
- a. inevitable
 - b. facts of nature
 - c. grounded in natural law
 - d. social constructions *

Part II. True/False Questions

21. Humans have always lived in extremely unequal societies. F

22. As complex civilizations emerged, societies became more unequal. T
23. Men have always been highly dominant in all societies. F
24. Every society divides itself by race. This is a fact of human nature. F
25. The sociological imagination is a skill that allows one to understand one's own experience in the context of history and society. T
26. Because there are multiple dimensions to inequality, these often cancel each other out, making everyone more or less equal. F
27. The Kuznets curve predicted that all societies would inevitably become more unequal over time. F
28. Large agrarian empires were some of the world's most unequal societies. T

Part III. Short-Answer Questions

29. What are the key dimensions of inequality that are emphasized by sociologists?

Ans: Race, class, and gender (often including ethnicity, religion, age, and sexuality).

30. Which types of workers are hardest hit by deindustrialization?

Ans: Working-class industrial workers, particularly older, female, and nonwhite blue-collar workers.

Part IV. Essay Questions

31. How do race, class and gender, along with other dimensions of inequality, interact to affect a person's life chances? Provide some concrete examples.

Ans: Students can discuss how social class interacts with race and other factors (e.g., middle-class urban African Americans compared to rural poor African Americans), with gender (men who are fast-tracked for promotion versus those who have lost jobs to deindustrialization), with race and gender (the complex mix of challenges faced by black men compared with black women). A basic answer captures the idea of double or multiple disadvantage. A more complete answer would include examples of how the dimensions may combine in complex and nonobvious ways.

32. How has inequality varied over human experience and history? What characterized the divides of other societies? Is inequality likely to grow or diminish in the future? Explain.

Ans: Students can note the growth of inequality from hunter-gatherers up to agrarian societies, then the complexity and possible decline of inequality in industrial societies. The growth of postindustrial society has seen some decline in gender inequality but also growing gaps between wealthy and working classes within countries accompanying deindustrialization and the rise of globalization. Students might reflect on whether they see evidence this will continue or be challenged in an information age.