

How Socio-economic Status Affects Social Institutions

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### Socioeconomic Status and Social Institutions

How does socio-economic status affect different social institutions? This is a problem in society today because lower class areas tend to suffer more from problems that are out of their control, which in turn can cause depression and other health issues. These problems can negatively affect social institutions such as education or family.

#### **Synthesis of Previous Research**

Socio-economic status plays a key role in the mental health of individuals. Gilman (2003) explains that a lower economic status can result in higher rates of depression and other mental health issues (p. 1349). The causes of these increased rates stem from the increased stress placed on individuals with tighter budgets and lower income. They are constantly put under pressures that middle and upper class individuals do not face, one being the fear of unemployment (Artazcoz, 2004). This can gradually damage mental health to an unhealthy level. Not only do these cases of depression affect the adults that are placed under this pressure, but increased depression in parents can lead to unstable households, and cause depression in their children as well (Gilman 2003). Socioeconomic status can cause depression in young children, which can cause more mental and emotional problems later in their life.

Socioeconomic status has a large impact on living arrangements. A lower income will most likely result in buying and living in a home that is less expensive. These less expensive homes can often be found in underprivileged areas, where school systems are not funded or taken care of as well as surrounding areas (Whillans, 2019). Schools then become less beneficial for their students, as they are not receiving enough money to fund better teachers. As a result, children's education is drastically affected. This domino effect can then cause children within

that district to lack a proper education to get them a well-paying job (Teard, 1979). This causes them to work a lower income job, keeping them and future generations within the same socioeconomic status as their parents.

Along with the mental health risks that a lower socioeconomic status can bring, the risks go far beyond just the brain. Johnson (2006) explains that the strain of having to constantly be thinking about income and how much money you have causes physical damage to the body (p. 684). These high levels of stress can cause serious cardiovascular problems for adults after many strenuous years under pressure (Winkleby, 1992). The sample of adults tested also proved that other health risks are also more commonly present in these lower class individuals beyond just cardiovascular risks.

Furthermore, minority group areas are often subject to more detrimental buildings and factories that emit dangerous toxins into the air and can damage the body. These toxins (from toxic waste facilities, factories, and dumps) can be inhaled and enter the lungs, causing an immense amount of damage over time. The smallest particles from these inhaled toxins can enter the body's bloodstream and travel to the brain. This can slow down the learning process for young children, and speed up aging in adults.

### **Suggestions for Solutions**

The research that has been analyzed has shown how many problems that lower class groups face as a result of their socio-economic status. One solution to fix the problem of poor health could be a more even divide in the placement of hazardous buildings that impact the health of citizens. Counties that focus their construction of dangerous buildings in lower class areas could focus more on spreading these developments to higher class areas. If these higher

class individuals fight this idea, then the evidence from this research could be provided to show what will happen if these buildings continue to be built near each other.

If the previous solution is put into effect and hazardous buildings are more spread out within counties or cities, then the same can be done with higher class buildings and facilities that can provide jobs. If these facilities are moved closer to lower class areas, then individuals in those domains can achieve higher paying jobs and provide more for their family. This will lower the amount of stress they are put under and improve their health with a lower probability of cardiovascular problems or depression. This will provide a better environment and atmosphere within homes, and improve the family social institution.

Lastly, to resolve the negative effects on the education social institution, counties can provide more funding to public schools in lower class areas. The research proved that lower class regions receive inadequate funding for their schools, and therefore are not providing as good of an education as schools in nicer areas. If more funding was provided for the salaries of teachers, or for the school itself, there would be a higher incentive to provide a quality education for its students, and would allow them to get better jobs in the future, which would benefit the county or state overall.

### **Conclusion**

How does socio-economic status affect different social institutions? Despite the damage that has been caused due to the divide in social class within counties or cities, there are solutions that can be put in place to save these lower class areas. The research mentioned earlier proves that lower class families face many disadvantages and dangers due to the ways in which their city functions. They face increased rates of depression, cardiovascular problems, and even risks

of possible brain damage (Gilman 2003). If small actions can start to be done now, then cities can provide a more equal experience for all, and social institutions will be saved and provide better lives for those in lower class areas.

## References

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