

SOC 102 Research Paper

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Social Class is one of the main functioning objectives within sociology and society..

Social class is based on where one stands with wealth in society. Social class provides the idea of inequality within society based on wealth, education, and occupation. Social class is normally something which is hereditary within society but is a main function of a healthy society for some theorists. Moving up in social class is something which can be achieved but it is not something which is a common occurrence. Issues within social classes are provided by the media, and more often than not, there are stereotypes given to the specific classes which as well makes it harder to get equality within society (Couldry & Rodriguez, 2022).

There are four types of social classes within society which often rank from wealthiest to the individuals in poverty. The highest class is the capitalist or upper class, the second highest is the middle class, after the middle class is the working class, and the lowest is the lower class. The upper class is a smaller percentage of the population which is very similar to the lower class. The middle class is not as small as the upper class but more than the lower class. The working class is the most common for it just has less stability than the middle class. These different social class provide different opportunities to each individual based on where they are placed in society by birth.

There are two different theories within social class which are consensus theories as well as conflict theories. These two are very different from each other and provide different perspectives on the way social classes affect different families as well as marriages. These two theories divide the way society is viewed by the different social classes. Within this, many upper class individuals tend to go with consensus theories while the lower class goes with conflict theories. These two theories provide different perspectives on the way society should work versus how it works in reality.

Consensus theorists believe that social class is key for society to function. This is seeing society as needing levels to be able to provide different resources for different communities (Cohen, 2014). While some are higher in social class than others, each individual provides a key role to society and the way society functions. This as well provides the idea that individuals who are lower in social class work more to be able to provide for their families. Conflict theorists see social class as a bad form of inequality within society and that wealth and social class are controlled by specific members of society. This is not something which is believed to be natural but something which has been conditioned to be normal in society's outlook on social class.

As well as being part of a social class, being part of one provides you with a specific mindset and identity for the class. Growing up in a specific class gives you a different outlook on society than the other social classes. There are ways of life which each class lives and it is often very different from the others. Many children tend to surround themselves with individuals of the same social class as them to make themselves more comfortable (1998). Adults as well do this which is a reinforcement of social hierarchy within society.

Often, children tend to struggle more with mental health when they are in the lower social classes than the higher social classes (Murali & Oyeboode, 2004). The individuals who are in the higher level of social class tend to have less to worry about and less to do on a day to day basis. Many do not have jobs as well until they are part of the “adult” world within society whereas children part of the lower class normally get jobs around 13 years old or 14 years old. This is something which is a large factor in the way children view society based on the real world experiences they have at a young age.

As well as it affecting mental health, social class often affects marriages as well. Money struggles within the lower social classes tend to affect marriages more which leads to divorce.

This is a common occurrence of families fighting and separating based on money struggles within social classes. The working class tends to have a higher divorce rate as well as having money issues over the middle class and upper class (Wilcox & Wang, 2017). Many times, in the lower social class, since the divorce rates are higher there is a large amount of single parents which the children rely on. This makes it harder for the parents to raise their social class when raising children on their own. This as well makes the children's lives more complicated and harder for they are not experiencing as much as the higher social classes.

Another issue within social class inequality is educational opportunities. This is a very common issue for it starts in elementary school and continues for the first years of the children's lives. There are private schools as well as public schools and within this, there is a very large difference between the education and how much the children learn. As well as this, based on wealth, many children do not get the opportunity to go to college or even graduate high school in certain situations. This can create a greater difficulty when attempting to find jobs as the individuals get older based on how much education they were able to achieve during their early years.

Inequality in social class has become more apparent over the years as it grows. Social class used to not be as aggressive as it is now for it is something which controls many people's daily lives now. Over time, social class has affected resources and the availability of resources to each social class. This has become more apparent because many social classes do not have the same opportunities as others such as the workforce as well as access to healthcare and different things which would help individuals get into a higher social class. It used to be easier to move your way up into a higher social class but now it is much harder for many people who do not have the opportunity to do this.

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