

Agenda

1. Administrative
2. Course roadmap
3. Inequality & mobility
4. Social divisions & class

Worksheet deadlines

- ∴ 11:59pm deadline is *strict*
- ∴ Peer evaluation tool cannot allow late submissions
- ∴ Submit your worksheets first to FeedbackFruits

Turn in worksheets in *two places*

- ∴ **First:** under Content
(Content > Discussion worksheets)
- ∴ **Second:** under Assignments
(Assignments > Work sheet X)

Last few weeks

⋮ Foundations

Methods overview

Classical (European) social theory

⋮ The individual in society (*bottom-up*)

Ethnicity, race, and nationality

Disability

Gender and sexuality

Class and culture

⋮ Populations and publics (*top-down*)

Inequality and stratification

Demography

Politics and economy

Social movements

⋮ Social systems (*middle-out*)

Interaction

Institutional change

Organizations and groups

Media and technology

Next few weeks

⋮ Foundations

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Inequality & mobility





Unequal distribution of resources

- ∴ Some people have *more than others*
- ∴ *Predictable patterns* of inequality

Types of resources

- ∴ 💰 Money 💰
- ∴ **But also:** power, opportunity, geographic mobility, social capital, legal protections, ...



Ubiquitous

- ∴ Empirically, high levels of inequality are present in virtually every human society

Measures

- ∴ **Absolute measures:** poverty defined against universal 'baseline'
- ∴ **Relative measure:** poverty defined relative to what is 'normal' in a society

Gini index (or Gini coefficient)

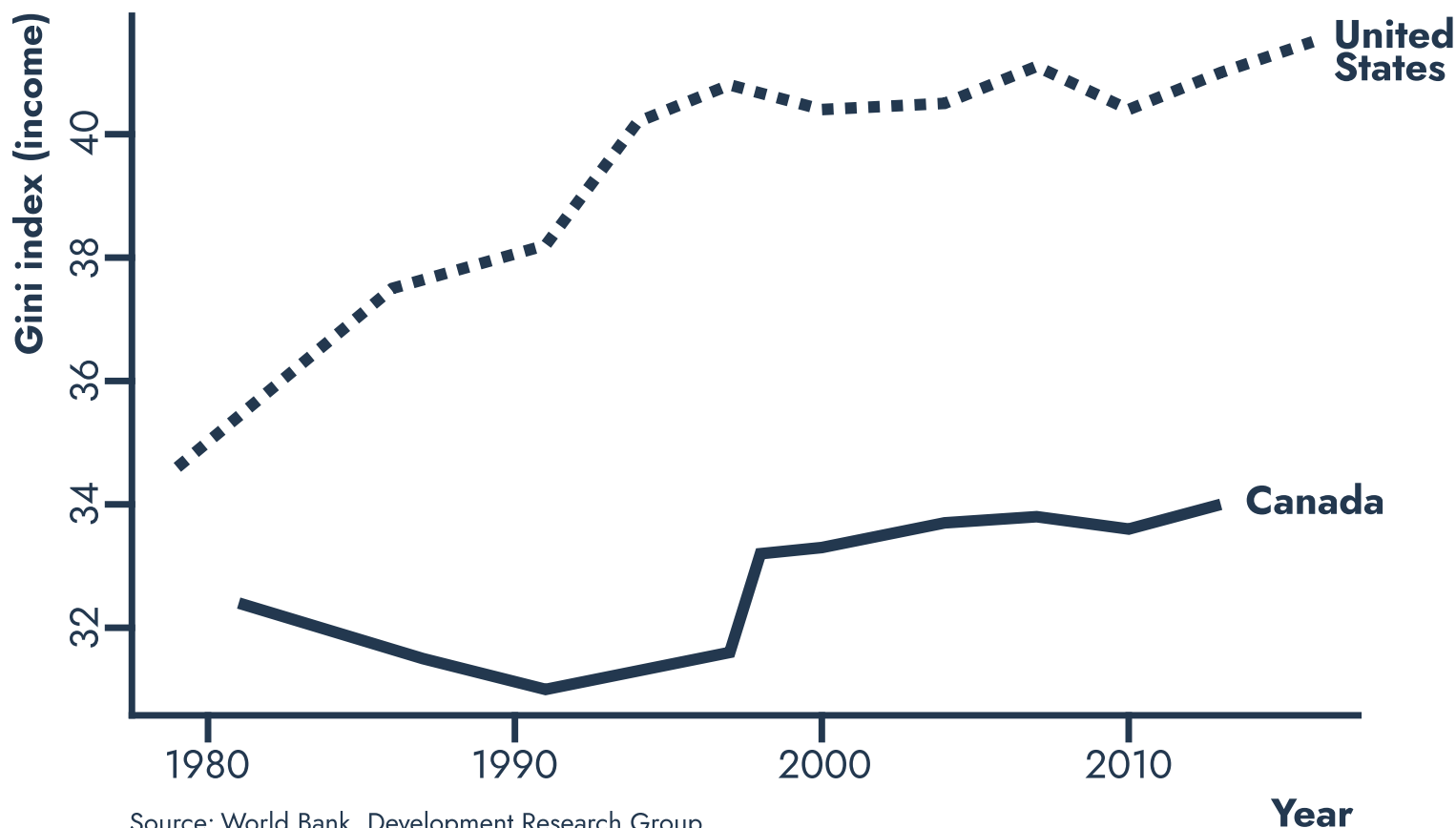
- Common measure of inequality

- Ranges from 0–100 (or 0.0–1.0)

From absolute equality to absolute inequality

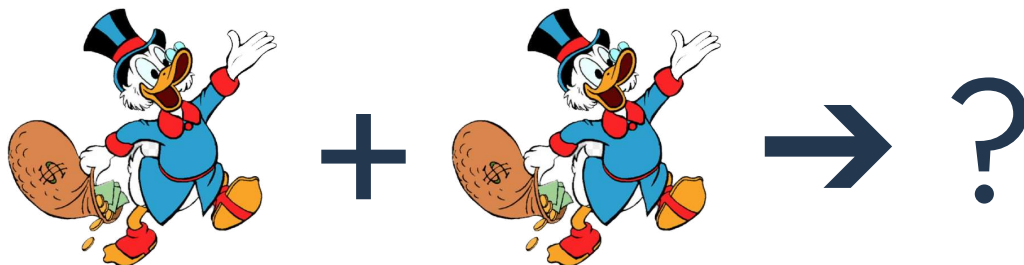
- Relative, not absolute*

Could have a population with low inequality but widespread poverty, or a population with high inequality and no poverty



Source: World Bank, Development Research Group.
(<http://iresearch.worldbank.org/PovcalNet/index.htm>).

Year



Patterns of inequality

- ∴ Wealth is not a random lottery
- ∴ Predictable structure to who has more and who has less

Inheritance of opportunity

- ∴ Empirically, income and wealth are largely predicted by family
- ∴ Wealthy people are much more likely to come from wealthy families than poor families, and vice versa

Mobility refers to these patterns

- ∴ 'Stickiness' of who is where in the unequal income distribution
- ∴ How hard is it to move up or down in a society's income distribution?



Stratification

- ∴ Term to describe patterns of inequality
- ∴ Geological metaphor
 - Differences *appear* categorical
 - Vertical dimension

Stratification and Mobility

- ∴ People are born into particular strata
- ∴ How easy is it to get to a different stratum?
- ∴ Direction matters
 - Upward mobility versus downward mobility



Structural barriers

(external)

⋮ Material

Family wealth, area of residence, ...

⋮ Institutional

Access to schools and clubs, social relationships, ...

Socialized barriers

(internalized)

⋮ Socialized traits

Habits, language, skills, aesthetic, ...

⋮ Internalized expectations

Access to schools and clubs, social relationships, ...



Social divisions & class



Previously:

- ∴ Discussed social class from a micro-sociological perspective
- ∴ Interactionist lens on class boundaries
- ∴ Michelle Lamont

Today:

- ∴ Broader perspective
- ∴ Social class from a *macro-sociological* perspective



What is social class?

Some theoretical perspectives:

Karl Marx

- ∴ A person's class is based on their relation to the means of production
- ∴ ***Bourgeoisie, petite bourgeoisie, proletariat, lumpenproletariat***

Max Weber

- ∴ A person's class is based on the interplay of three components
- ∴ ***Wealth, prestige, & power***

Pierre Bourdieu

- ∴ There are three *interchangeable* forms of class
- ∴ ***Economic***: money, income, wealth
- ∴ ***Social***: relationships, social circles
- ∴ ***Cultural***: knowledge of art, cuisine, taste

Multidimensionality of class

- ∴ Contemporary sociologists tend to engage with all of these frames
- ∴ Focus on class as multi-faceted
- Class is defined by a bundle of differentiated resources, behaviors, and cultural attributes

Institutionalization of class

- ∴ Class can become formally institutionalized and codified
E.g. Feudal Japan and Europe, India under British colonial rule
- ∴ Modern ethos: class boundaries *should* be permeable
- ∴ Class is still *institutionalized* through norms, barriers to mobility, etc.

Hierarchy alignment

- ∴ *Social hierarchies tend to "line up"*
- ∴ Whenever a social division has a power dimension, it will likely align with class
Canadian MPs over 85% white and over 70% men
Over 90% of Fortune-500 CEOs are white men
- ∴ Barriers to mobility become tied to categories
Relation to ethnicity, gender, race, etc. complicates strictly economic interpretation of class



Canadian House of Commons
December, 2018

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