

### **Ableism**

The practice of discriminating against persons with disabilities.

### **Ageism**

The practice of discriminating against persons on the basis of their age or perceived age.

### **Anti-Intellectualism**

The practice of discriminating against persons on the basis of their perceived higher intelligence or elitist position

### **Calvinistic Predestination**

A 16<sup>th</sup> Century doctrine of the followers of John Calvin that asserted that God predestined all that comes to pass on earth so if you are blessed on earth with material wealth it is sign that you are one of the chosen of God. Max Weber theorized that Europeans were under the influence of this doctrine culturally even if they did not believe it religiously and it is because of this belief that wealth = goodness that the capitalists strive to increase their wealth and workers work hard to achieve wealth. (See "Protestant Ethic.")

### **Career Life Span**

The general pattern most professional careers take with younger people having to work longer hours with less team support than more experienced workers. There are many who believe the current pattern favors men due to biological limitations of having children and that men would benefit from a different career path that would allow them to pay more attention to their families in their early careers and thus even the playing field between the sexes so that both sexes would be able to put off career building until their children are older.

### **Cultural Production**

Those goods and services produced to further culture such as art, literature, theatre, cinema, radio, television and education. Gramsci theorized that because Capitalists are the patrons, endowers and advertisers who support the arts, what is taught in culture is often in the best interest of the rich. This means that the working class public often support political measures that are not in their own best interest.

### **Clustering of America**

A marketing company discovered the thing that Americans have in common with each other most is what we buy and they have identified 62 different cluster types and classified zip codes accordingly. Thus one way to look at socioeconomic class is it is about what we buy and where we live more than about our income or capital holdings.

### **Discrimination**

The act of favoring a particular group of persons above other groups of person on the basis of something other than merit. Intention is not the issue in determining if something or someone is discriminating against a group. One only need establish the pattern of decisions that has led to an unequal treatment of individuals on the basis of something other than merit.

### **Ethnicity**

A person's cultural history & heritage, usually reflective of their ancestry and their upbringing.

### **Exchange Mobility**

A macro look at social mobility that shows that when one group of people become upwardly mobile, often other groups suffer thus keeping the overall proportions of social classes essentially the same in a given population.

### **Feminism**

The belief that gender inequality is wrong and that an effort must be made to change cultural values so that men and women are on an equal footing. There have been three waves of feminism in US History: first wave which mostly concerned itself with voting rights; second wave which mostly concerned itself with equal work and equal pay; and the third wave which mostly concerns itself with diversity among women.

### **Feminization of Poverty**

The trend in the past 50 years for most female, single parent, head-of-households to dip below the poverty line at some point, thus making women (and their children) a growing proportion of the poor.

### **Fair Privilege**

A social privilege granted to persons on the basis of merit. Sociologists who concern themselves with social justice do not fight to end this kind of privilege but rather fight to ensure equal access to these privileges.

### **Gender**

Feminine and Masculine. The social expectations that men and women face due to their sex. Many sociologists believe that there are more than just the two as some people dismiss gender expectations and others come to exhibit characteristics that are often viewed as both feminine & masculine. Also, social scientists have found that gender roles & gender definitions vary cross-culturally and over time.

### **Gender Stratification**

The unequal distribution of power, prestige & property due to differences between the sexes. In Western civilization, historically, men (especially first born sons) have been favored over all others. (See patriarchy)

### **Gender Wage Gap**

The difference in pay between men and women, generally expressed as how many cents on the dollar women make compared to men. Occupation, Education & Age interact with the gap making it a more complicated social phenomenon than is often talked about in popular discourse.

### **Genocide**

The mass killing of persons belonging to a certain social group (usually ethnicity) in a systematic attempt to get rid of that group.

### **Goffman, Erving**

Work on stigmatization is a major contribution to the study of social inequality.

### **Glass Ceiling v. Glass Escalator**

Because of the social structures of most employers (corporations, non-profits, governments, etc.), men often are put on fast tracks that help them rise to the top more easily and women & minorities often find they can rise no higher than a certain point. These phenomenon are probably more of the result of the social interactions of management (see Power Elite, Social Distance & Stranger) than a conscious effort on their part. However, many believe that it can only change with a conscious effort to not discriminate.

### **Globalization**

Due to changes in transportation and communication inspired by industrialization, it easier to travel and communicate with more places and persons around the world. This phenomenon has affected cultures, social systems, individuals and economies in controversial, negative and positive ways. This is an increasingly important focus of study among sociologists.

### **Gramsci, Antonio**

An Italian Marxist who was imprisoned under Mussolini for his activism. He theorized that because the owners of the means of production financed cultural production through endowment, patronage or sponsorship, cultural values often reflect the needs of the owners and not the workers. Because workers learn values through culture, they often hold beliefs and attitudes that are not in their own best interest. (See hegemony)

### **Hegemony**

The process by which the values of the financiers of cultural production (through endowment, patronage or sponsorship) are reflected and disseminated through those material and non-material cultural products (books, newspapers, magazines, movies, theatre, commercials, television shows, music, etc.)

### **Heterosexism**

The practice of discriminating against persons on the basis of their sexual orientation.

### **Horatio Alger Myth**

A series of stories written in the mid-1800s that always ended with the hard-working person being reward with wealth and upward social mobility. (see Social Myths)

### **Immigration**

The movement of persons or groups of persons from one place to another.

### **Institutional Discrimination**

Practices within an organization that discriminate among persons on basis of something other than merit. Generally, the intention of the decision-makers are not relevant, but rather established patterns that result in discrimination are examined and are often found to be illegal.

### **Intergenerational Mobility**

Most immigrant descendants move upward in social mobility from the original immigrant generation.

### Interlocking Directorates

The practice, usually legal, of persons serving on more than one corporate board of directors. Many critics have pointed out that this can constitute an end-run around anti-trust laws by appearing on paper to have separate organizations competing with each other, when in practice the same people are influencing decision-making to the benefit of a few with little competition involved. This practice has also been used to go around vertical monopolies that dominate a chain of manufacturing and distribution of products. Regulating interlocking directorates and monopolizing practices have become more difficult with globalization as board members can sit on companies that are based in multi-countries and thus don't have a single regulatory oversight. Sociologists observe that this is a major way power elites can preserve their power.

### Language of Privilege

Constructionists view social privilege by examining what we say (see uneven dichotomies) and do not say about privileged persons. Many qualitative sociologists look for assumptions and defaults in discourse to identify social privilege.

### Life Chances

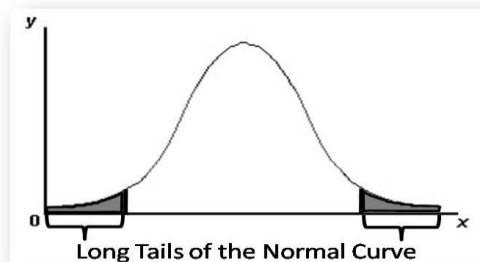
The potential an individual has to achieve all that they desire.

### Levels of Racial Discrimination

Generally, discrimination moves from less harmful practices to extremely violent practices. There is some debate as to whether these practices lead to each other, but many anti-racists believe that attention should be paid to verbal abuse and symbolic violence because it will eventually lead to more violent levels like extermination.

### Long-Tail Groups

Globalization and the expansion of communications across international boundaries has been praised as a way for persons with highly specialized and rare interests to find other persons who share their interests and group together. These are called "long-tail" referring to the outlying "tails" of a Bell Curve (normal distribution) where those who are different from the majority are represented.



### Marx, Karl

19<sup>th</sup> century social philosopher who coined the term "capitalism" and wrote extensively regarding society and economics. He basically theorized that capitalism would fail because the owners of the means of production were in a no-win situation, seeking to maximize profits by pushing down labor costs and yet needing consumers of their goods, which pushes up wages.

### **Marxism**

The subsequent followers of Marx's ideas who critically examine capitalism.

### **Means of Production**

Natural resources are transformed into goods & services via human labor. The manner in which this is done is called means of production. In Capitalist economies, ownership of these means (for example a factory) is privately held by individuals or groups of individuals.

### **Meritocracy**

A system or society that rewards people on the basis of what they do not how they look or who they know.

### **Military-Industrial Complex**

A term coined by Dwight D. Eisenhower in his last speech to the American People as president (in 1961, just before JFK's inauguration). Eisenhower warned that as the country relied more upon private scientific and technology development to wage war, there would be a big economic incentive to stay in war or war preparations. This complex, he feared, would have so much influence over politics that it would be impossible for American politicians to work towards peace. Given the recent developments of nuclear weapons and the cold war, this warning was a grave one. However, many feel that it is just as relevant today as it was then. Sociologists point out that such large economic incentives require offsetting balances of power in legislative and economic circles. Many sociologists have been concerned that over the years, American social policy has suffered greatly due to this complex and the drain it places on government budgets.

### **Mills, C. Wright**

Mid-20<sup>th</sup> century sociologist who examined power relationships and social inequalities. He wrote about the Power Elite and Sociological Imagination.

### **Minority Group**

Individuals who are ascribed a lower status on the basis of group membership, not merit. Minority is not about numbers, but rather about power status.

### **Other "isms"**

Generally, the three big categories of social inequality studied by sociologists are classism, racism, and sexism. But other unfair discriminatory practices exist and sometimes these practices even lack names. The naming of the practice is one way to gain power in dealing with the practice. Other isms we discussed briefly in class were: ablism, ageism, anti-intellectualism, heterosexism and sizism

### **Patriarchy**

A system of social order that favors men over women and historically in Western civilization has favored the first born son by rights of inheritance and bestowing property, prestige & power in their favor.

### **Poverty / Poverty Level**

A measurement based upon the spending power of currency, generally an attempt to determine at what point one has less money than can adequately provide for the basic needs of a household (thus, location, size of household and current cost of living indices affect the poverty line)

### **Power**

The ability of one person or group to control or influence the actions and thinking of another person or groups. It is always a relationship. People do not hold power. They act powerfully over other people. Without the other, there is no power. We speak of it as something that a person "has" or "holds" but it is more accurately the description of an interaction between two people or two groups of people.

### **Power Elite**

C. Wright Mills observation that there is a group of people in American society who hold power by virtue of who they are and who they know, not what they know. He notes the interchangeability of members of the military, government and big business. This elite exists because of their informal social networks, not because they are organized into a formal cartel.

### **Prejudice**

The attitude or beliefs held by individuals regarding the worth of another group of people. Generally distinct from discrimination in that it refers to interpersonal relationships and the intentions of individuals rather than practices within social systems. (Pre-Judge)

### **Privilege**

An advantage held by one individual over another.

### **Protestant Ethic**

A term coined by Max Weber that refers to the belief that hard work and wealth are signs of goodness. This is a cultural leftover from the concept of predestination, which held that one way to know who was the chosen of God was to see how blessed they were materially.

### **Race**

A social category based upon how a person looks. Race has changed in definitions over the years and across cultures. While biological characteristics are often used to define race, there is no biological basis for race.

### **Racism/Racist**

The practice of discriminating against persons on the basis of race or perceived racial or ethnic characteristics.

### **Segregation**

A discriminatory practice of physically separating individuals on the basis of social inequality either by law or by traditional practice.

### **Sexism/Sexist**

The practice of discriminating against persons on the basis of their gender.

**Simmel, Georg**

German sociologists who wrote extensively regarding group dynamics and group interactions with strangers.

**Sizism**

The practice of discriminating against persons on the basis of their height or weight.

**Social Class**

The distinction of individuals on the basis of some characteristic other than merit. Usually once the distinction is made, a hierarchy of status provides an unequal distribution of power, prestige and property on the basis of that characteristic.

**Social Distance**

The closeness or distance people feel from each other. Persons within our social groups are usually regarded as closer than strangers, but strangers who share characteristics with us are usually more easily accepted in our groups than those who are different. Thus, there is usually more social distance among persons who are different from each other.

**Social Discrimination**

Practices that limit the life chances of individuals on the basis of something other than merit that are informal in nature, usually on the basis of how people interact with strangers. (distinct from formal systems called "institutional discrimination")

**Social Mobility**

The change in social status, usually referring to moving up or down the socioeconomic ladder.

**Social Myths**

Stories that are told in order to provide inspiration and motivation to others as a means to control their behavior or instruct them in what is expected of them. (See Horatio Alger Myth)

**Social Stratification**

The unequal distribution of power, prestige and property on the basis of a social characteristic or status.

**Socio-Economics**

The stratification of individuals in as society on the basis of wealth (property). Usually measured via income, though many are now suggesting that either assets or purchasing power/choices might be a better measuring stick.

**Spoiled Identity**

When a person is stigmatized they are unable to overcome the negative impression others ascribe to them. If they attempt to show they are different than the stigma suggests, they are perceived as "inauthentic." Thus, their ability to manage impressions are spoiled.

**Status Symbol**

Material culture than denotes a higher status. Examples are higher-end cars, big homes, designer clothes, etc.

### **Status inconsistency**

Persons often exhibit status symbols that mislead others to believe they have a higher status than they do. This works because most of us make “snapshot” judgments of strangers without getting to know them on a fuller or deeper level.

### **Stereotypes**

A set of characteristics ascribed to persons on the basis of their perceived group membership. Rather than a recognition of what members generally have in common, it is a belief that all members of a particular group have these characteristics with no individual variation. Usually these characteristics are negative or are perceived to be “less than” other members of society (even when the specific characteristic is positive).

### **Stigma/Stigmatization**

The marking of specific individuals on the basis of how they look or with what group they are affiliated as being “less than human.” Erving Goffman suggests that such persons have a “spoiled identity” because they cannot conduct impression management in such a way to avoid sanction. If a stigmatized individual acts according to expectations they find themselves in the position of confirming a stereotype. If they act against the stereotype, their presentation of self is considered inauthentic by others.

### **Stranger**

A sociological archetype referring to persons who enter a group space from the out-group position. Strangers who share characteristics with group members are often more readily accepted into a group than strangers who are different. Also, strangers are often the way in which group members come to identify with groups.

### **Unequal Dichotomies**

Often in our culture we pair two concepts because one is more powerful than the other: men and women; black and white; rich and poor, etc. This language reflects privilege.

### **Unjust Privilege**

A social privilege that no one should have over other people. Sociologists who fight this kind of privilege do so by calling for those who hold it to relinquish it.

### **Upward Mobility**

The movement up the socio-economic ladder to a higher status in society, usually through either an increase in assets or income.

### **Weber, Max**

German sociologist who understood capitalism and classism to have derived from a cultural history of Calvinism & Predestination. He coined the term “protestant ethic.”

### **Weber’s three —Ps**

Prestige, Power & Property – these are what given persons higher status in society