10.E: Global Inequality (Exercises)

10.1: Global Stratification and Classification

Stratification refers to the gaps in resources both between nations and within nations. While economic equality is of great concern, so is social equality, like the discrimination stemming from race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and/or sexual orientation. While global inequality is nothing new, several factors make it more relevant than ever, like the global marketplace and the pace of information sharing.

Section Quiz

A sociologist who focuses on the way that multinational corporations headquartered in core nations exploit the local workers in their peripheral nation factories is using a _________ perspective to understand the global economy.

1. functional
2. conflict theory
3. feminist
4. symbolic interactionist

Answer

B
A ____________ perspective theorist might find it particularly noteworthy that wealthy corporations improve the quality of life in peripheral nations by providing workers with jobs, pumping money into the local economy, and improving transportation infrastructure.

1. functional
2. conflict
3. feminist
4. symbolic interactionist

Answer

A

A sociologist working from a symbolic interaction perspective would:

1. study how inequality is created and reproduced
2. study how corporations can improve the lives of their low-income workers
3. try to understand how companies provide an advantage to high-income nations compared to low-income nations
4. want to interview women working in factories to understand how they manage the expectations of their supervisors, make ends meet, and support their households on a day-to-day basis

Answer

D

France might be classified as which kind of nation?

1. Global
2. Core
3. Semi-peripheral
4. Peripheral

Answer

B

In the past, the United States manufactured clothes. Many clothing corporations have shut down their U.S. factories and relocated to China. This is an example of:

1. conflict theory
2. OECD
3. global inequality
4. capital flight

Answer

D

**Short Answer**

Consider the matter of rock-bottom prices at Walmart. What would a functionalist think of Walmart's model of squeezing vendors to get the absolute lowest prices so it can pass them along to core nation consumers?

Why do you think some scholars find Cold War terminology ("first world" and so on) objectionable?

Give an example of the feminization of poverty in core nations. How is it the same or different in peripheral nations?

Pretend you are a sociologist studying global inequality by looking at child labor manufacturing Barbie dolls in China. What do you focus on? How will you find this information? What theoretical perspective might you use?

**10.2: Global Wealth and Poverty**

What does it mean to be poor? Does it mean being a single mother with two kids in New York City, waiting for the next paycheck in order to buy groceries? Does it mean living with almost no furniture in your apartment because your income doesn’t allow for extras like beds or chairs? Or does it mean having to live with the distended bellies of the chronically malnourished throughout the peripheral nations of Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia? Poverty has a thousand faces and a thousand gradations.

**Section Quiz**

Slavery in the pre-Civil War U.S. South most closely resembled

1. chattel slavery
2. debt bondage
3. relative poverty
4. peonage

Answer

A

Maya is a twelve-year-old girl living in Thailand. She is homeless, and often does not know where she will sleep or when she will eat. We might say that Maya lives in __________ poverty.
1. subjective
2. absolute
3. relative
4. global

Answer
B

Mike, a college student, rents a studio apartment. He cannot afford a television and lives on cheap groceries like dried beans and ramen noodles. Since he does not have a regular job, he does not own a car. Mike is living in:
1. global poverty
2. absolute poverty
3. subjective poverty
4. relative poverty

Answer
D

Faith has a full-time job and two children. She has enough money for the basics and can pay her rent each month, but she feels that, with her education and experience, her income should be enough for her family to live much better than they do. Faith is experiencing:
1. global poverty
2. subjective poverty
3. absolute poverty
4. relative poverty

Answer
B

In a U.S. town, a mining company owns all the stores and most of the houses. It sells goods to the workers at inflated prices, offers house rentals for twice what a mortgage would be, and makes sure to always pay the workers less than needed to cover food and rent. Once the workers are in debt, they have no choice but to continue working for the company, since their skills will not transfer to a new position. This situation most closely resembles:
1. child slavery
2. chattel slavery
3. debt slavery
4. servile marriage

Answer

C

**Short Answer**

Consider the concept of subjective poverty. Does it make sense that poverty is in the eye of the beholder? When you see a homeless person, is your reaction different if he or she is seemingly content versus begging? Why?

Think of people among your family, your friends, or your classmates who are relatively unequal in terms of wealth. What is their relationship like? What factors come into play?

Go to your campus bookstore or visit its web site. Find out who manufactures apparel and novelty items with your school’s insignias. In what countries are these produced? Conduct some research to determine how well your school adheres to the principles advocated by USAS.

**10.3: Theoretical Perspectives on Global Stratification**

Modernization theory and dependency theory are two of the most common lenses sociologists use when looking at the issues of global inequality. Modernization theory posits that countries go through evolutionary stages and that industrialization and improved technology are the keys to forward movement. Dependency theory, on the other hand, sees modernization theory as Eurocentric and patronizing.

**Section Quiz**

One flaw in dependency theory is the unwillingness to recognize _______.

1. that previously low-income nations such as China have successfully developed their economies and can no longer be classified as dependent on core nations
2. that previously high-income nations such as China have been economically overpowered by low-income nations entering the global marketplace
3. that countries such as China are growing more dependent on core nations
4. that countries such as China do not necessarily want to be more like core nations

Answer

A
One flaw in modernization theory is the unwillingness to recognize ________.

1. that semi-peripheral nations are incapable of industrializing
2. that peripheral nations prevent semi-peripheral nations from entering the global market
3. its inherent ethnocentric bias
4. the importance of semi-peripheral nations industrializing

Answer

C

If a sociologist says that nations evolve toward more advanced technology and more complex industry as their citizens learn cultural values that celebrate hard work and success, she is using ________ theory to study the global economy.

1. modernization theory
2. dependency theory
3. modern dependency theory
4. evolutionary dependency theory

Answer

A

If a sociologist points out that core nations dominate the global economy, in part by creating global interest rates and international tariffs that will inevitably favor high-income nations over low-income nations, he is a:

1. functionalist
2. dependency theorist
3. modernization theorist
4. symbolic interactionist

Answer

B

Dependency theorists explain global inequality and global stratification by focusing on the way that:

1. core nations and peripheral nations exploit semi-peripheral nations
2. semi-peripheral nations exploit core nations
3. peripheral nations exploit core nations
4. core nations exploit peripheral nations
Short Answer

There is much criticism that modernization theory is Eurocentric. Do you think dependency theory is also biased? Why, or why not?

Compare and contrast modernization theory and dependency theory. Which do you think is more useful for explaining global inequality? Explain, using examples.