



# **Social Stratification: Class, Race, And Gender In Sociological Perspective (Social Inequality Series)**

*David B Grusky*

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The field of stratification is being transformed and reshaped by advances in theory and quantitative modeling as well as by new approaches to the analysis of economic, racial, and gender inequality. Although these developments are revolutionary in their implications, until now there has been no comprehensive effort to bring together the classic articles that have defined and redefined the contours of the field. In this up-to-date anthology, the history of stratification research unfolds in systematic fashion, with the introductory articles in each section providing examples of the major research traditions in the field and the concluding essays (commissioned from leading scholars) providing broader programmatic statements that identify current controversies and unresolved issues. The resulting collection of articles both celebrates the diversity of theoretical approaches and reveals the cumulative nature of ongoing research. This comprehensive reader is designed as a primary text for introductory courses on social stratification and as a supplementary text for advanced courses on social classes, occupations, labor markets, or social mobility. The following types of questions and debates are addressed in the six sections of the reader: 1. Is stratification inevitable? Do the recent “experiments with destratification in Eastern Europe and elsewhere provide new insights into the functionalist theory of inequality? 2. Can we identify a set of organized and cohesive “social classes” in advanced industrial societies? Does it make sense to refer to a ruling class, a “political class,” or a “power elite” in these societies? 3. Are the basic contours of occupational mobility the same within all advanced industrial societies? Have the “new structuralists” led us astray in our attempts to understand the sources and causes of occupational attainment? 4. Are there fundamental differences across social classes in styles of life, patterns of consumption, and attitudes toward work? Are these “class-specific cultures” attenuating as we move into advanced industrialism? 5. Is there an emerging underclass in America? What are the principal sources of racial, ethnic, and gender inequality? 6. Can we identify a “teleological dynamic” driving the development of stratification systems? Are new forms of stratification and inequality emerging as Eastern Europe enters its postsocialist stage? The volume offers essential reading for undergraduates who need an introduction to the field, for graduate students who wish to broaden their understanding of stratification research, and for advanced scholars who seek a basic reference guide. Although most of the selections are middle-range theoretical pieces suitable for introductory courses, the anthology also includes advanced contributions on the cutting edge of research. The editor outlines a modified study plan for undergraduate students requiring a basic introduction to the field.

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