

Prelim in Social Stratification and Class Analysis  
December 20/21, 2004 – Administered by Samuel R. Lucas

Part I – First three hour session of two

Answer Question 1. Then, answer Question 2 *or* Question 3.

**Question 1 (Required)**

For 8 of the following terms, identify the content of the term, its use in social stratification and class analysis, and key authors debating/using the concept and their perspective.

- a) ascription
- b) natural growth
- c) status group
- d) exploitation
- e) taste discrimination
- f) SEI
- g) compensating differentials
- h) EMI
- i) prestige
- j) social capital
- k) circulation mobility
- l) poverty

**Question 2**

Relate the key existing theories of the relationship between educational attainment and adult outcomes. Then, using these theories, sketch the implications, accurate or not, of the theory for *one* of the phenomena/populations mentioned **below**. Be sure to evaluate the theories' implications on the basis of existing empirical evidence of which you are aware; also be sure to evaluate the adequacy/strength of the empirical evidence. If there is no such evidence, describe the research one would need to do to assess the ability of the theory to explain the phenomenon.

- a) Adult Immigrants to the United States and the 1.5 and second generation
- b) Parents status characteristics and children's success
- c) Race differences
- d) Sex differences
- e) The decision to engage in criminal behavior

**Question 3**

Relate the key existing theories concerning the maintenance of earnings inequality in society. Then, using these theories, sketch the implications, accurate or not, of the theories for *one* of the phenomena/populations mentioned **above**. Be sure to evaluate the theories' implications on the basis of existing empirical evidence of which you are aware; also be sure to evaluate the adequacy/strength of the empirical evidence. If there is no such evidence, describe the research one would need to do to assess the power of the theory for the phenomenon of interest.

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Part II – Second three hour session of two

–Answer 1 of the following 2 questions: Question 1 *or* Question 2.

**Question 1**

A major line of stratification research has debated the role of class in political contestation. This debate has led analysts to propose a variety of ways of defining class as well as a variety of ways of operationalizing political action. Discuss and evaluate these researchers' central substantive claims, the theoretical bases of these claims, and the criticisms others have articulated. Be sure to attend to the evidentiary basis for the positions discussants espouse.

**Question 2**

Analysts have debated whether schools have reproductive or egalitarian effects. Surveying the research, identify and evaluate the key theories analysts have advanced as well as the substantive findings relevant to adjudicating the theories. Finally, state where the weight of the evidence falls, and what this means for our understanding of societies' ability to alter the patterns of social stratification.

–Answer 1 of the following 2 questions: Question 3 *or* Question 4.

**Question 3**

Marx argued that collective ownership of the means of production was essentially a worldwide certainty; the only important question appeared to be where and when collective ownership would begin. Few analysts now adhere to this position. However, perhaps the position has been abandoned too hastily. Considering the social stratification literature, build a persuasive case that the dynamic development of the economy and polity will, in the next one hundred years, wipe away private ownership (in the Marxian sense) and usher in the Marxist paradise. Be sure to ground your case in empirical research, substantive knowledge, and the theoretical tools available.

**Question 4**

The vast majority of social stratification research uses statistical methods; a much smaller set uses historical/comparative approaches; a still smaller (but growing) set uses participant observation techniques. Almost no stratification research is conducted using *experiments*. Identify two controversies or nagging questions in social stratification research that have been assessed using statistical methods, and design a feasible experiment to address the controversy (and improve our understanding of the phenomenon). Be sure to identify and justify key aspects of the designs, such as sample design and measurement, that would attend any rigorous statistical analysis in social stratification. (No mixed-method designs can be suggested)