

Prelim in Social Stratification and Class Analysis  
March 4/5, 2010

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) social mobility
- b) thesis of industrialism
- c) segmented labor market
- d) prestige
- e) statistical discrimination
- f) cultural capital
- g) credentialism
- h) stereotype threat
- i) RRA
- j) ethnic enclave
- k) natural growth
- l) exploitation

**Question 2**

Convey the major theories of the causes of immigration and the determinants and process of immigrant incorporation. Then, using existing empirical evidence, weighed by your stated evaluation of the strength of that evidence, evaluate the accuracy of each theory as an explanation of the causes of immigration and the incorporation of immigrants. Finally, outline a research program designed to evaluate (and, if possible, adjudicate between any) theories that remain viable.

**Question 3**

Convey the major theories concerning impact of immigration on native born members of the society, in socioeconomic, political, and cultural spheres. Then, using existing empirical evidence, weighed by your stated evaluation of the strength of that evidence, evaluate the accuracy of each theory for understanding the impact of immigration on the native born. Outline a research program designed to evaluate (and, if possible, adjudicate between any) theories that remain viable. Be sure to attend to any relevant diversity amongst the native born and any relevant diversity among immigrants.

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Part II – Second three hour session of two

–Answer 1 of the following 2 **SETS** of questions (**Either** 1A and 1B **OR** 2A and 2B):

**SET 1**

**Question 1A**

In the wake of the election of Barack Obama as president, the wider public discussion of the thesis that race no longer matters in U.S. society has intensified. Critically use the research literature to develop your answer to this question for three or more dimensions of stratification. Be sure to attend to trend where possible, and to use the literature to coherently conceptualize the phenomenon of race in the United States.

and

**Question 1B**

Analysts have long-debated the role of schools in increasing or reducing earnings inequality, yet closure in this debate seems elusive. Briefly convey at least four major, distinct, theories of the role of schools with respect to earnings inequality. Then, drawing on the empirical literature, identify the theories most consistent with existing evidence. Be sure to consider the major threats to establishing the role of schools in increasing or reducing earnings inequality.

~or~

**SET 2**

**Question 2A**

Analysts have proposed various definitions of social capital in their efforts to understand social stratification. Convey and discuss the central definitions of social capital. Then, critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each definition, including their coherence and their implications for whether social capital is a distinguishable concept. Next, using your preferred definition of social capital, assess the utility of the concept of social capital for understanding the maintenance of stratification. Be sure to draw on the empirical evidence bearing on the role of social capital in constructing and/or maintaining stratification where helpful for assessing the utility of the concept.

and

**Question 2B**

Marx argued that collective ownership of the means of production was a global certainty. Few contemporary analysts agree. However, perhaps the position has been abandoned too hastily. Drawing on the social stratification literature, build a persuasive case that over the next 90 years the dynamic development of the economy and polity will 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.