

Study Questions, Week 9

Topic for the Week: Globalization and Inequality in the World System

Readings for the Week:

“Society: The Basics,” Chapter 9

“Sociological Footprints,” Chapters 18 (Ritzer) and 55 (Flavin)

Questions:

(1) How is *global inequality* measured? Why does global inequality differ if we consider inequality between individuals versus inequality between nations? What classification systems are used to describe inequality between nations? What are some characteristics of nations in each category?

(2) The author asserts that poverty in poor countries is *more severe* and *more extensive* than in rich countries. What are some of the effects of global inequality on people in poor countries?

(3) What is meant by *slavery*? What is the relationship between slavery and poverty? Does slavery still exist in today’s world? Explain.

(4) What factors account for the degree of poverty that exists in much of the world?

(5) What is meant by *colonialism*? Does colonialism still exist in today’s world? Explain.

(6) How does global inequality affect children? Consider how living in wealth or poverty affects aspects of children’s lives such as labor, food scarcity, and health care.

(7) Distinguish the *modernization* and *dependency* explanations of global development and stratification. How is inequality produced and perpetuated under each theory? What role do rich nations play in the global system under each theory?

(8) What is meant by a *global economy*? To what extent do modernization and dependency theories help us understand the transition to a global economy? What are the weaknesses of these explanations?

(9) What does George Ritzer mean by *McDonaldization*? What are the dimensions of this phenomenon? Does this process apply only to McDonalds? Explain.

(10) What is meant by the term *rational*, as used by Ritzer? How is McDonalization a process of rationalization?

(11) Some of the starkest examples of social stratification are found in developing countries. What factors lead to social inequality in developing countries such as Brazil and the Philippines? Provide examples of how the rich and poor live in these countries, and what can be done to address inequalities.