

Inequality

SECOND EDITION

Inequality: A Contemporary Approach to Race, Class, and Gender offers a comprehensive introduction to the topics animating current sociological research focused on inequality. Contemporary, engaging, and research oriented, it is the ideal text to help undergraduate students master the basic concepts in inequality research and gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which race, class, and gender interact with systems of social stratification.

Following an introduction to theories and research methods used in the field, the authors apply these concepts to areas that define inequality research, including social mobility, education, gender, race, and culture. The authors include up-to-date quantitative evidence throughout. The text concludes by examining policies that have facilitated inequality and reviewing the social movements that in turn seek to reshape those structures. Though primarily focused on the United States, it includes a chapter on stratification across the globe and draws on cross-national comparisons throughout.

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Inequality

A Contemporary Approach to Race, Class, and Gender

SECOND EDITION

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From LAK to JWM
From DES to EJ

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Preface

When we wrote the first edition of this text, we wanted to offer a fresh approach to teaching and learning about inequality. Our goal was to provide a comprehensive resource that would expose students to cutting edge research, teach them skills that would be useful in evaluating evidence related to inequality, and take into account the profound changes we have seen in the last few decades in the U.S. and global economies.

We also felt that such a text could meet the needs of multiple audiences:

- Students who go on to become sociology majors and practitioners or researchers in the field.
- Students who become critical consumers of sociological research in their professional lives.
- Students who want to bring an informed mindset to their reading of news accounts and public policy debates involving inequality and stratification – a topic that is in the headlines, in one form or another, just about every day of the week.

We were gratified with the response to the first edition of this text. Instructors found it contemporary and accessible, and they appreciated that it did not advance a political agenda. They felt that it met the needs of the range of students in their classes. Students responded to the tone of the text, finding it compelling and straightforward without the information being overwhelming. The analyses were presented so that students with a wide range of abilities could engage them. We are pleased to be able to introduce the second edition.

Main Features of this Text

- We include topics that are central to research and public discourse in the areas of race, class, and gender, offering separate chapters on each of those topics.
- It does not advance a political agenda. Rather, the text presents current sociological research on inequality in a way that encourages discussion and invites varied opinions. However, it also incorporates these important topics as they arise in reality and refrains from treating them as issues that can be confined and discussed separately from other issues related to inequality.
- Each chapter is filled with contemporary statistical evidence related to the chapter's topic. Most analyses were conducted by the authors and all use the most current data sources

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available. For example, we rely heavily on the Survey of Consumer Finances, widely regarded as the gold standard for understanding the wealth and income of U.S. households.

- The text acknowledges both quantitative and qualitative approaches to inequality and provides students with the skills to be comfortable with methods of analyses that are widespread in research on inequality.
- Includes updated exercises, discussion questions, and resources (written and online) that allow students and professors to dig deeper into each of the subjects covered in the text.

What's New in the Second Edition

- All tables and figures are current – the second edition includes all-new data and updated literature.
- Relies on a variety of data sources to underscore important points. Most of the estimates are from the authors' analysis of secondary data.
- Presents streamlined discussion of theories and summaries of contemporary papers to illustrate theoretical paradigms.
- Includes updated literature to ensure that students are reading the most current research on each subject.
- Provides additional, related information in text boxes that illustrate key concepts and connect current research to public conversations about inequality.
- The chapter "Women's Changing Positions," from the first edition, now focuses on gender and not only women. It provides a section on masculinities and is inclusive of LGBTQ+ groups with current research reflecting this shift in sociology.
- The policy chapter includes Social Change. It provides the theoretical approaches to studying social movements with vivid examples of grassroots organizations that affected global social change.
- The second edition has images that provoke critical thinking and discussions about issues related to inequality. For example, while presenting the theory of the hidden curriculum, the second edition includes an image of classroom children doing the "Bellamy salute," which was the norm when Bellamy penned the Pledge of Allegiance.

Organization of This Text

The organization of chapters both reflects the content that instructors expect to cover in a course on inequality and summarizes the current state of research in inequality.

- The text begins with an introductory chapter designed to draw students in and convince them that the study of the subject is important for future sociologists and future consumers of sociological research alike.

- Chapter 2 grounds the book theoretically, presenting ideas that are core to the study of inequality and that motivate much public discourse of related issues.
- Chapter 3 covers research design and statistical concepts that will make contemporary inequality research accessible to students. This chapter provides a critical bridge between the concepts presented in the text and published research. Instructors who also assign journal articles, for example, will find that this chapter offers a useful set of tools.
- Chapter 4 provides an overview of the American class structure in order to frame the chapters that follow.
- The remaining chapters present up-to-date research and give students a sense of the current structure of research and debates in the field of inequality, and each chapter will guide the students in applying theoretical ideas learned in Chapter 2.
- The final chapter presents policies that shape inequality, reviews the social structures of the democratic process including who votes, who is elected, and what special interest groups exert power over this process. It ends by presenting a theoretical discussion of social change and offers three cases of grassroots organizations that were successful in making change, both nationally and globally.

Online Resources for Instructors

Instructor resources are available at www.cambridge.org/inequality2:

- PowerPoints and JPEGs of all the figures and tables in the book
- PowerPoint lecture slides
- Extra short-answer questions for instructors
- Sample syllabi for different course types.

Online Resources for Students

Student resources are available at www.cambridge.org/inequality2:

- Multimedia resource lists
- Interactive multiple-choice quizzes for self-practice.

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