CHAPTER 7: GLOBAL STRATIFICATION

Video Activity (Premium Resource CD Rom)  
**Oxfam Report on World Poverty**

**Annotation:** This video refers to a report by Oxfam (an international relief organization). The number of people currently deprived of basic rights like food and healthcare around the world is greater than in 1945, when the United Nations was established. The web site also includes three questions for students to answer about poverty and what might be done to relieve it.

**Learning Objective:** To understand the structural impediments to relieving even the worst instances of poverty around the world.

**Faculty Note:** The textbook offers data on the unequal distribution of wealth among nations. The exercise below urges students to consider why these disparities remain, and why only structural solutions, not merely charity, will be required to reduce such disparities. This video clip is a part of the “Premium Resource CD Rom” provided to instructors upon request.

**Activity:** Ask students to view the video "Oxfam Report on World Poverty," and then go to Oxfam's web site http://www.oxfamamerica.org/about/index.html. Here they can read about Oxfam's policies and programs, designed to help poor people around the world help themselves. Ask students whether they believe that such programs are likely to result in large-scale reductions in poverty. Talk with them about the structural sources of resistance to redistribution of wealth and political power, urging them to include dependency theory, the culture of poverty, and multinational corporations.


**Test Question:** (Essay) Could poverty in the least-industrialized nations be eliminated by simply increasing charitable contributions to these countries?

*Answers might include:* Not likely--simply increasing charitable contributions would not address the underlying structural causes of poverty, including the economic and political structure of many least-industrialized countries.

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**Interactive Map  
Groups of Economies (Global Stratification: Purchasing Power)**

**Annotation:** This interactive world map shows relative income levels in all countries. The Interactive Map is found in Henslin's Companion Website that accompanies the latest edition of *Sociology: A Down to Earth Approach*. This page is located at [http://wps.ablongman.com/ab_henslin_sociology_6/0,5241,209916-,00.html](http://wps.ablongman.com/ab_henslin_sociology_6/0,5241,209916-,00.html). Click on “Interactive Map” in the left hand column and then choose “Global Stratification: Purchasing Power”.

**Learning Objective:** To develop an awareness of the relationship between economic and political conditions in countries around the world.

**Faculty Note:** The exercise below draws students into an analysis of the relationship between political structure and economic well being. It demonstrates that dependency and neocolonialism impact both personal freedoms and economic prosperity.

**Activity:** Have students examine the average incomes among countries around the world displayed on the Interactive Map "Global Stratification: Purchasing Power.” Assign all the countries to members of the class. Have students read about Freedom House's "Freedom in the World Survey” found at [http://www.freedomhouse.org/research/freeworld/2000/methodology.htm](http://www.freedomhouse.org/research/freeworld/2000/methodology.htm) and then look up the "Comparative Measure of Freedom” rating [http://www.freedomhouse.org/research/freeworld/2000/table1.htm](http://www.freedomhouse.org/research/freeworld/2000/table1.htm) of the countries they are assigned. Have students combine their results into one table, showing the income level and Measure of Freedom rating of all the countries.

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Ask them whether they see any relationship between the two variables. Discuss with them why these two variables might be related.


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**Web Link**

**World Wide Web Activity**

*Slavery Information on the Web*  
*Examine the Contemporary Practice of Slavery*

**Annotation:** Although not well publicized, slavery is still practiced in many parts of the world including Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Recently, diplomats and other nationals from Saudi Arabia came under criticism for bringing their slaves with them to the United States while serving as ambassadors and in other political positions. In addition, organized crime has a long history of forcing women into prostitution. This inspired the passage of the Mann Act in 1910, also called the White Slave Trafficking Act. In addition to the Web Link found in the Companion Website, the following additional web sites address slavery as a contemporary social problem:

- Contemporary Slavery and Involuntary Servitude  
- Slavery Watch featured in Kalamu Magazine  
  [http://kalamumagazine.com/current_events.htm](http://kalamumagazine.com/current_events.htm)
- Slavery and Organized Crime  
- Anti-Slavery International  
  [http://www.antislavery.org](http://www.antislavery.org)

**Learning Objective:** To develop awareness of the different forms of slavery and the conditions that promote these different forms.

**Faculty Note:** This exercise extends the discussion of contemporary slavery in the textbook by elaborating the multiple forms of slavery and encouraging students to think about the social conditions that promote and sustain these forms.

**Activity:** Have students review the web sites listed in the annotation and then discuss the social and economic conditions that may promote modern day slavery and how slavery today is similar and different than the institution of slavery as it is known in American history.

**Additional Resources:** The American Anti-Slavery Group [http://www.iabolish.com](http://www.iabolish.com) claims to be the only American organization dedicated to abolishing slavery worldwide.

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**Video Activity (Premium Resource CD Rom)**

*New York Shopping*

**Annotation:** This video shows New Yorkers shopping for holiday gifts in a shopping mall. Several shoppers talk about rushing to buy gifts and spending a lot of money.

**Learning Objective:** To learn about the relationship between the abundance of inexpensive consumer goods in the U.S. and living conditions in the least industrialized countries, where many of those goods are produced.

**Faculty Note:** The exercise below encourages students to consider the benefits they derive personally from the exploitation of labor in the least industrialized countries. This video clip is a part of the “Premium Resource CD Rom” provided to instructors upon request.

**Activity:** Ask students to watch the video clip "New York Shopping," and then lead a discussion of their own experiences shopping for holiday gifts. Ask students to examine the labels on twenty articles of clothing they have in their closets. Have them list the countries where each of these articles was manufactured. Next to each country have them write the average annual per capita income in that country (from Figure 7.2 in the text). Lead a discussion about the relationship between the low cost of consumer goods in the U.S. and the living conditions in the countries that produce those goods.
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Additional Resources: Additional web sites regarding the abuse of foreign and domestic workers can be found by typing "sweatshops" into the key word box of any search engine. Among the sites that will be helpful are the site “Human Rights for Workers" at http://www.senser.com/cl.htm and “The Consumer and Sweatshops” at http://www.marymount.edu/news/garmentstudy/historic.html

Test Question: (Essay) Why are large proportions of consumer goods sold in the U.S. produced in the least industrialized nations?

Answers might include: The cost of production is much lower in the least industrialized nations. Wages are lower. Labor and environmental protections are less restrictive.

Web Link  The World HungerWeb

Annotation: This web site provides links to resources that focus on the following aspects of hunger around the world: research, fieldwork, advocacy and policy, and education and training.

Learning Objective: To develop a deeper understanding of the factors associated with economic stratification for people in countries around the world.

Faculty Note: The most prominent criterion to measure global stratification is income. Having a high or low income has implications for people's lives far beyond the amount of material goods they can buy. The exercise below invites students to investigate the relationship between income and other factors that are important to quality of life (e.g., health, education) and prosperity (e.g., slow population growth).

Activity: Have students click on the Web Link “The World HungerWeb" and peruse the information provided in this site. Then have them examine UNICEF's "State of the World's Children" http://www.unicef.org/sowc96. Ask students to browse the "Statistical Tables," which provide information about 150 countries on infant and child mortality, immunization, maternal mortality, malnutrition, school enrollment, discrimination against girls and women, nutrition, health, education, population, and economic progress. Ask students to compare (either orally or in a written report, including data tables) conditions in the U.S. on several of these dimensions to conditions in several least industrialized countries.

Additional Resources: The Population Reference Bureau http://www.prb.org/ provides extensive, authoritative demographic, economic, and health data on all countries.

Web Link  Cultural Survival

Annotation: The "Cultural Survival" homepage describes this non-governmental organization. Cultural Survival was established in reaction to the extraction of resources in previously undeveloped regions of the world, and the related mistreatment of indigenous people. Links are provided to descriptions of many projects around the world that have been created to sustain indigenous cultures.

Learning Objective: To develop awareness of the negative consequences of industrial development--the loss of culture and mistreatment of indigenous people.

Faculty Note: Industrialization and economic development offer advantages for the least industrialized countries; yet these changes bring negative consequences as well. Indigenous people are unable to resist the taking of their land and destruction of their culture. The exercise below will expose students to the negative consequences of economic development in the least industrialized countries, as well as strategies to counteract these consequences.

Activity: Have students click on the "Cultural Survival" web link, and read about the organization by clicking on the various links. Begin with the “more information” link in the box marked “Ethnosphere”. Descriptions of projects undertaken by Cultural Survival are linked to the homepage. Ask each student to read about one of the projects.
Have them report about these projects to the class. A report might include a description of the problem that the project was responding to and the strategy employed by the project to ameliorate that problem.

**Additional Resources:** Harvard University's Program on Nonviolent Sanctions and Cultural Survival at [http://www.wcfia.harvard.edu/ponsacs/homepage.htm](http://www.wcfia.harvard.edu/ponsacs/homepage.htm) offers programs that bring together the diverse interest groups that have a stake in economic development in less developed areas of the world to seek solutions to their conflicting concerns.

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**World Wide Web Activity**  
*Global Economy: Is global trade doing more harm than good?*

**Annotation:** The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) stirs many blue color workers. It means a loss of jobs, unemployment, and hard times. In Illinois, Maytag recently announced they will be shutting down a factory that employs 1,600 local residents in a community of 34,000. The factory is relocating to Mexico where local labor can expect two dollars an hour compared to the fifteen dollars an hour Maytag was paying American workers. To make matters worse, for each job lost at Maytag, it is estimated there will be three additional jobs lost in the community that are directly related to the purchasing power of the Maytag work force.

**Learning Objective:** To examine the loss of American jobs and to understand it on a larger scale.


**Activity:** After the students have had a chance to read the web sites suggested and research this topic, lead a discussion on who is benefiting most from NAFTA, both in the short run and long term. Is there a case to be made for the conflict perspective of capitalism and exploitation in accordance with basic Marxist principles? Why or why not? Are Americans willing to pay several times more for consumer goods such as sneakers, clothing, cameras, and even automobiles to have them manufactured in the United States?

**Additional Resources:** *Watchdog Sweatshops* is found on the *Interactive Video for Introductory Sociology*. This video clip further addresses the controversy regarding foreign labor to produce low cost consumer goods sold in the United States. In addition to the discussion outlined under the above activity section, have the students answer the following questions based on the video clip.

1. How do purchasing power and price relate to wages and income?
2. How do purchasing power and price relate to the standard of living? What other indicators might measure standard of living?
3. According to your text, what are some sociological explanations for the causes of poverty? How do these explanations relate to global inequality?
4. What might be some social consequences of over concentration of wealth in any society?