Social Inequality Example

Final Paper

During the entirety of this semester we have focused on different aspects of social inequality. After being introduced to the chapters provided in the text, you can conclude that social inequality focuses specifically on economic, racial and gender inequality. These three components allow us to see how there is inequality based on one’s wealth/income and physical characteristics as well as the unequal treatment based on gender. As each chapter has shown great significance and insight of why our country operates the way it does, there are three chapter that specifically spoke to me which where chapters 2,3,11 These three chapter focus on poverty and welfare, contemporary explanations of racial inequality and the impact of inequality on personal life chances.

In this paper you will be given an overview of each chapter. Then you will be shown the interconnectedness between each chapter and how these topics specifically relate to the African American community. In addition, you will be provided with four additional sources that validate the points made through out each chapter. Which will also be of service as it will provide clarity, evidence and allow individuals to see a broader perspective.
Chapter 2 in the text focuses on “Class, Income, and Wealth.” In this section of the book, Hurst focuses in on economic inequality and how it plays great significance to social inequality. Provided in this chapter is great insight on the two types of class structure, income inequality and wealth inequality.

Socioeconomic status is a tool of measurement created by the government, which helps place individuals in a class based on their occupation, education and income (Hurst 2013). Between social classes, is economic inequality. When speaking about economic inequality, specifically what is being focused on is income and wealth. When you think about wealth, the first word that often comes to mind is inheritance. While we often see wealth as something that is inherited and passed down from generation to generation, some may argue that wealth is not earned but given.

However, when looking at wealth from a monetary standpoint, it is easier for individuals of a higher socioeconomic status to sow a monetary seed that can reproduce itself. However, people of low socioeconomic status do not have the same opportunity. For example, people that sow their financial seed are capable of investing in things like the stock market but, for minorities that is not the case. Rarely is it seen that minorities become wealthy enough to accumulate enough money to be classified as wealthy. When examining wealth from a “racial focal point,” according to the article “Race and Gender Wealth Gap,” Karen Jaggar stated that “people of color own less wealth than white Americans, as revealed by the following data: African Americans (31 percent) and Latinos (35 percent) are approximately two and a half times more likely than whites (13 percent) to have zero or negative net worth” (Jaggar 2019:2).

With the information that Jaggar provides, this explains why many minorities are considered low class. This is because, they don't have the means to create an income that suffices for their household. Let alone, having the means to provide intergenerational wealth. Which further explains, why people the people who face poverty are individuals of low socioeconomic status. Then further explains why the study revealed that low income and poverty is the result of wealth being absent (Jaggar 2019).

Chapter two then coincides with chapter 3 on “Poverty and Welfare.” This chapter allowed readers to see that
living in poverty is not a choice nor is it something that has happened by accident. Poverty is rather something that’s been manmade by the government. It is the government who determines what the poverty threshold line is. Which also is key factor in determining who can get help.

As previously mentioned in chapter 2, one’s income and assets are the key features that determine whether one lives in poverty or not. People who are born into poverty typically don’t have the opportunity to advance because, society oppresses those who need assistance. While there are programs in place to help individuals, not everyone is given the opportunity to receive help. It's important to understand that, the government is more than capable of helping individuals. Yet, the government has the power to determine who is “deserving or underserving” (Hurst 2013). The government sees the deserving poor as individuals who have tried to make great efforts but, battle with reasons outside their ability to control. Then on the other hand, you have the underserving poor who are those who haven't made any effort. To paint a picture, the individuals who are worthy of receiving help are married, working and have children. While those who are unworthy of the governments help are those who are unemployed, without children or are single parents.

There are many government assistance programs such as SNAP, TANF, WIC, HOUSING etc. that are designed to help individuals of low income however, it comes with many difficulties. One cannot just apply and expect to be approved instead one must apply and hope that they qualify to receive benefits. For example, for individuals receiving snap benefits, depending on their household size must meet a certain percentage from their gross and net monthly income(). This brings me back to the deserving vs. the underserving, and the inequality that lays between the two. As previously mentioned, single parents are deemed as the underserving however, to say something like that is very degrading. There are many single mothers in the world who work 2-3 jobs just to support there family however, there income just isn’t enough to make ends meet. Therefore, they depend on the help from the government to provide for their family. But While the meaning behind the programs serves great justice to low income families, with all great things comes backlash.

In society, a lot of people are very judgmental and are placed with a stigma that doesn't confine to who they are.
Black single mothers typically are stigmatized as being lazy, unmotivated and fraudulent. But why? It’s because the elites in this country have painted a distasteful image to the media, by portraying single mothers as if they immoral beings and cons that use children as a come up (Foster 2008). Carly Foster examined societies opinions on the “Welfare Queen” while intersecting background demographic and was given great insight on how individuals felt about black women on welfare.

In chapter 11, Hurst talked about “The Impact of Inequality on Personal Life Chances”. This chapter touches on the physical health, mental health and need for food and shelter while looking at race, class and gender.

Life chances are exactly what it states. The change people get a life stems from the lives people had prior to them in their families. Most people ca already tell what they’ll have to do and what kind of life they’ll live based on their location, their parent's status, what kind of education the receive as well as many other factors Life chances for minorities are significantly more difficult because they are just that, a minority. They have to fight for the best because it's not automatically offered to them. The reasoning behind such is one that seems to only peak the interest of the minorities facing those disposition and not those who are pushed directly into better standards of living which is completely unfair to those who wish to achieve goals just as much as white people do People fail to realize that these life chances really determine the way people will spend the rest of their lives. These two articles show that when discussing life chances people feel as though they can just move or leave and everything be okay without taking into consideration the challenges and oppression they already face daily. Job opportunity is scarce as well as housing because it takes accredit score and many other things to be able to just star over. Factors that are not readily available to minorities"