

**Revision Sheet**  
**Mrs Le Gurun Euro class**

**INEQUALITIES**  
ECONOMIC INEQUALITIES: INCOMES AND ASSETS  
SOCIAL INEQUALITIES: GENDERS, AGES, GENERATION, CULTURE, IDENTITIES...  
INEQUALITIES ARE CUMULATIVE

**1/ ECONOMIC INEQUALITIES HAD DECREASED BETWEEN THE 19TH AND THE LAST 20TH CENTURIES**

**BEFORE (19th-20th): WEALTH INEQUALITY DECREASED**

WHEN / WHERE	WHAT inequality?	WHO is involved?	WHY / HOW	RESULTS
From the 19 <sup>th</sup> century (industrial Revolution) to the 1980's  Western countries	economic inequality	Working class / Blue collars / workers represented by <b>trade unions</b> (with mainly male workers)	<b>It's all about WORK and (male) EMPLOYEES...</b>  Thanks to the class struggle, <b>workers decided to fight for a fairer distribution of wealth... and they got it!</b>	In 2015, 10 percent of the world's population lived on less than US\$1,90 a day. <b>Extreme poverty decreased a lot, according to the World Bank.</b>

**Key words**

**Meritocracy**

A society that is supposed to exclusively distribute resources on basis of merit.

**Inequality**

Lack of equality.

Max Weber identified **status, power and wealth** as being elements of inequality, meaning that inequality *is not* just a matter of having money or not having money (**absolute poverty**). Actually inequalities encompass *all the desirable things* that are not equally spread throughout society, such as status, prestige, life expectancy... Personal growth.

So inequality is a **relative concept**. Those who experience inequality may feel oppressed and not part of the social system (social exclusion).

**Economic inequalities**

**Absolute poverty / relative poverty**

The **absolute poverty** is based on a figure that is the absolute minimum for basic survival (« *a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information* » World Bank). Using such a basic approach means that very few people in western countries are poor. Yet, this is clearly untrue.

Now we rather consider the **relative poverty**, when you cannot afford what others around you deem to be necessary. This change through years. As standards of living rose, the number of things considered as 'necessary' increased, and so did the number of people considered as 'poor' since they cannot afford all these things. (example: illimited internet, smartphones...)

**Wealth**

Wealth refers to the amount of property that a person owns: incomes of course but above all savings and investments (because it is a steadier form of wealth, while you can lose your salary at any moment...)

**Disposable income**

The total amount of money you can spend for your consumption or keep in savings.

**Economic inequalities (continuation)**

**Rate of poverty / poverty rate**

It is the ratio of the number of people whose income falls below the poverty line (threshold: 50 or 60 percent of the median income in a country).

**Gini Index**

It calculates the degree of inequality in the distribution of wealth within a society. A score of 100 indicates « perfect » inequality. Zero indicates « perfect » equality. It is often represented through a « Lorenz curve »

**Concentration of properties**

Something valuable (ex: real estate, financial assets) that someone owns and has use of, in generating incomes (interests, rentals, dividends).

**Living conditions / standard of living**

**Minimum wage**

**Universal Income**

**Measuring poverty**

Poverty can be and is measured in different ways by governments and associations. The main measure of poverty In the UK is the HBMI: **Households 60% Below Median Income**. It gives the **Poverty Threshold** or **Poverty line** (14 million people live below the poverty line in the UK in 2018, including 4,5 million children)

**Social inequalities**

**Social exclusion**

When some groups of people are not fully part of the whole of society. When poor people not only cannot afford some things but also *become powerless over the important decisions in their lives*. To be fully part of our society, people need access to: good income / good health services / a pleasant neighbourhood with low crime rate / access to transport / local services / facilities for a social network / opportunities for education and culture / good housing and access to many consumer goods

**AFTER (SINCE THE 1980's): WEALTH INEQUALITY IS INCREASING**

WHEN / WHERE	WHAT	WHO	WHY	RESULTS IN THE UK (and in other wealthy western countries)
since the 1980's Liberalism Market economy come back Less welfare state Less public spending	economic inequality increased again  relative poverty increased a lot too.  social inequality increased.	The richest get richer.  That increased the <b>relative poverty</b> : people <i>feel</i> poorer in a culture that values people by what they can <i>buy</i> .  Being poor means being vulnerable and powerless over the important decisions in our life.  The elderly The new generations The disabled Women Especially single mothers People who live in poorer areas Immigrants Ethnic minorities	Thatcher and 'Reaganomics': reduce tax burdens on the richest people >Less welfare state/ More market economy >  higher inequalities of pay AND very limited improvements in benefits (allowances) for the poor people	The wealthiest 10 per cent own more than half the wealth in the UK.  3 quarters of the total increase in incomes over the last decade has gone to those with above-average incomes and a third has gone to those in the richest tenth.  France, 2010: half the households own 93 percent of the total properties (Piketty). In France the <b>poverty rate</b> increased between 2008 and 2015, from 13 percent to 14,2 percent. But it is one of the lowest rates in Europe, thanks to the French social security. (INSEE, Eurostat)  <b>In contrast</b> Research shows that poor countries where people are more equal score better on quality of life surveys than rich but unequal countries...

**2/ SOCIAL INEQUALITIES: GENDERS, AGES, GENERATION, CULTURE, IDENTITIES...**

**INCREASING ECONOMIC INEQUALITY > DECLINING SOCIAL STATUS FOR THE MIDDLE CLASSES**

For the first time, young generations are expected to get a lower social position than their ancestors.

**AND OTHER SOCIAL INEQUALITIES CREATE DISCRIMINATION**

**GENDER INEQUALITIES STILL EXIST**

Women are no longer confined to chores, domestic tasks and to the rôle of **care taker**, thanks to their access to employment. They represent 50 percent of the active population nowadays in France. They also get higher degrees than men now...

**BUT**

Women fail to break the **glass ceiling**, which prevent them from reaching the highest social positions. They continue to be care takers *in addition* to their working day (mental charge, parenting, single mother...). Stereotypes prevent women to get an equal pay, equal career and life opportunities.

**AGE-RELATED INEQUALITIES INCREASE**

Young people and elderly struggle to find a job, and a well-paid one. Even if they find a job, it is often a precarious one (involuntary part-time job, fixed-term contract), if not a... bullshit job!

**STEREOTYPES CONTINUE TO CREATE ALL KINDS OF DISCRIMINATION AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY**

« Women are not good at maths and are meant to have children first of all ; workers' children have no taste for studies...Foreign people are known to be thieves, Homosexuals are effeminate...These **stereotypes** put **labels** on people, assign places and maintain inequalities. Even these populations tend to integrate their own labels and refrain themselves from thinking otherwise.

**3/ INEQUALITIES ARE CUMULATIVE**

**Social** background > *Unequal resources during socialization* > *unequal cultural capital (language, knowledge, degrees...)* > unequal academic success > unequal access to employment and career > **economic inequality**: unequal income > unequal access to the consumption standards (holidays, trips, brands, quality of food, health, cultural goods...) > unequal living conditions > (back to) **social inequality**: diseases, weight (obesity) + exposure to violent crimes + lack of opportunities + unequal **socialization**...

**and finally** > unequal **Healthy Life Years** (the number of years to live in good health *has decreased* for the first time in 2018 in France, in Sweden and in the USA... especially for women – And managers would likely live *7 years longer* than workers)

*Note that this could be a vicious circle...*