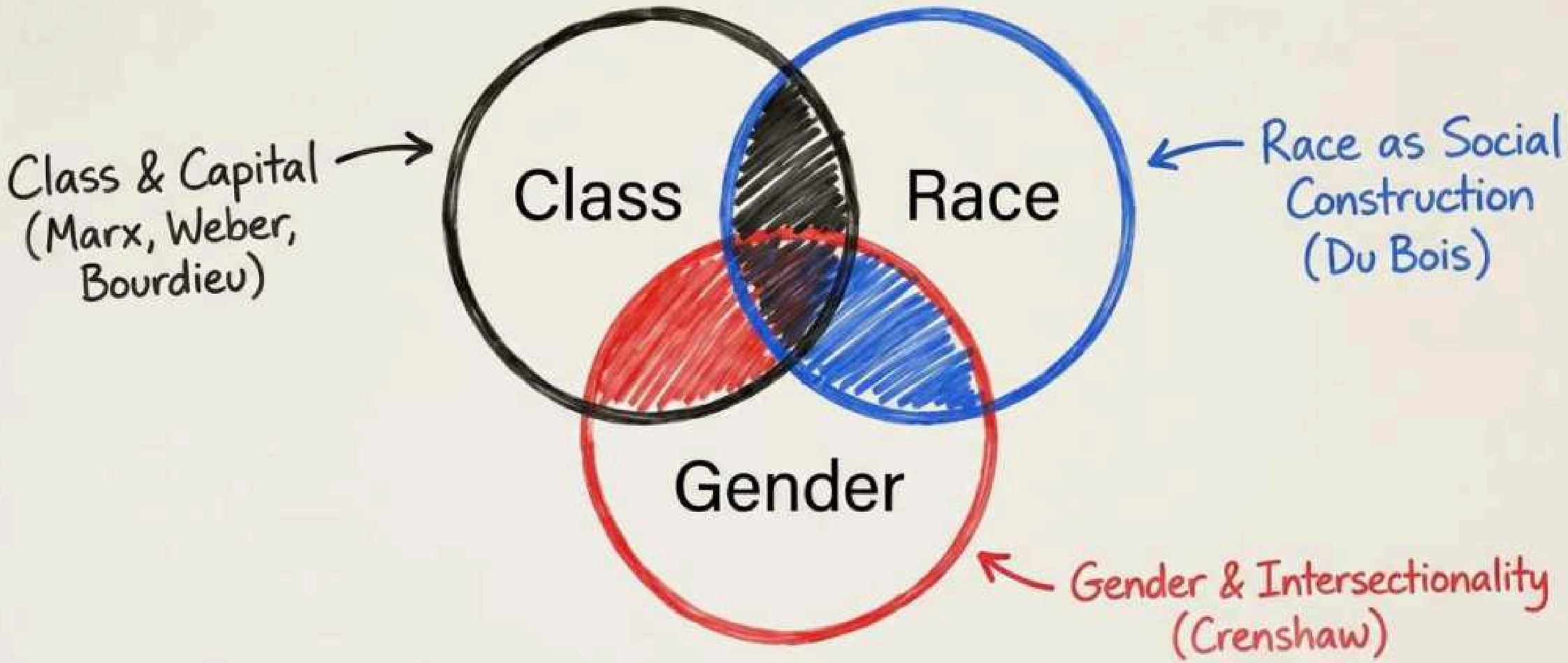
¶ 5.1

# Lecture 5: Inequality




At a glance: Analyzing the unequal distribution of wealth, power, and respect.

# The Architecture of Stratification

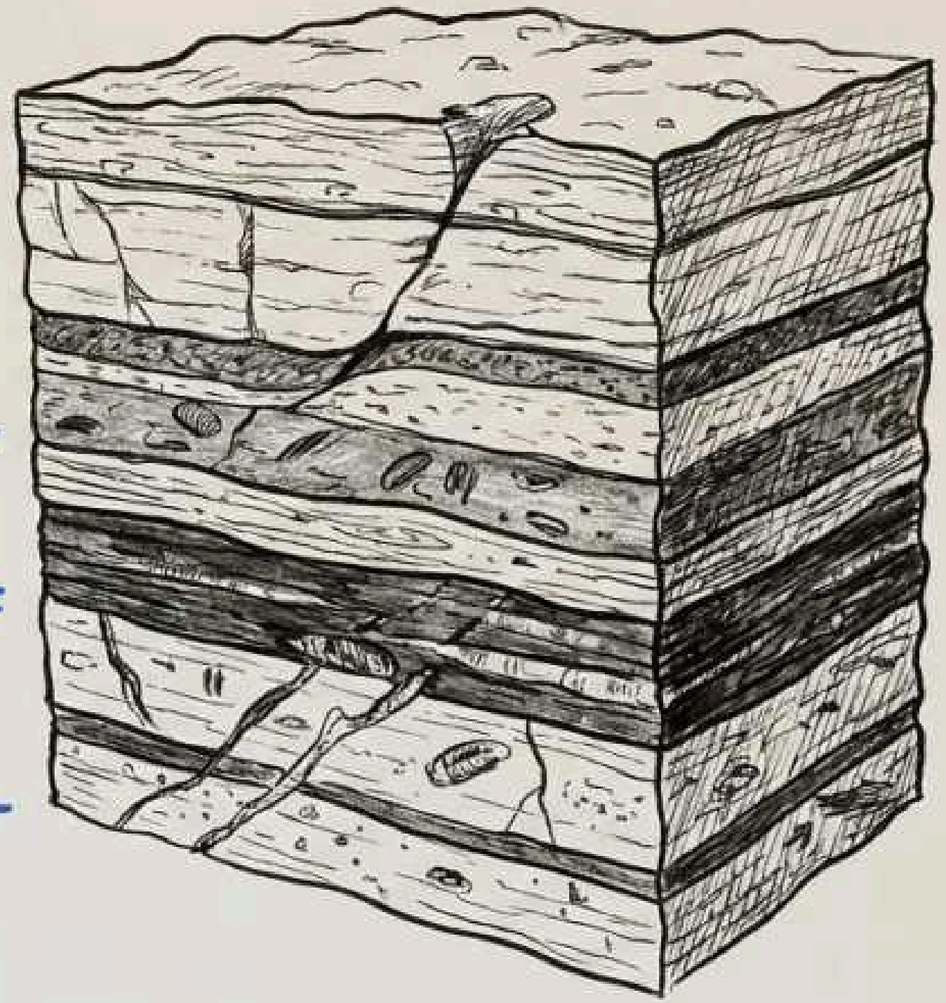
¶ 5.2

Social stratification is a patterned system where people are arranged in layers with unequal access to valued resources.

Layer 1: Wealth

Layer 2: Power

Layer 3: Respect

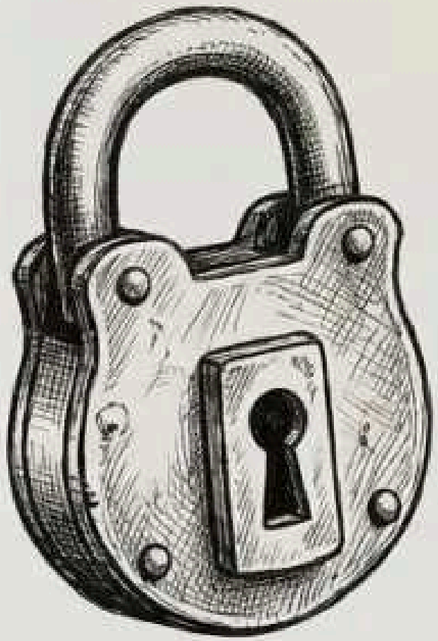


! Crucial: These differences are passed on in patterned ways.

# Systems of Stratification

¶ 5.3

## Caste System



- Position is fixed at birth.
- Extremely rigid; very hard to change.

## Class System

- Position depends partly on achievement.
- Social mobility is possible (in principle).



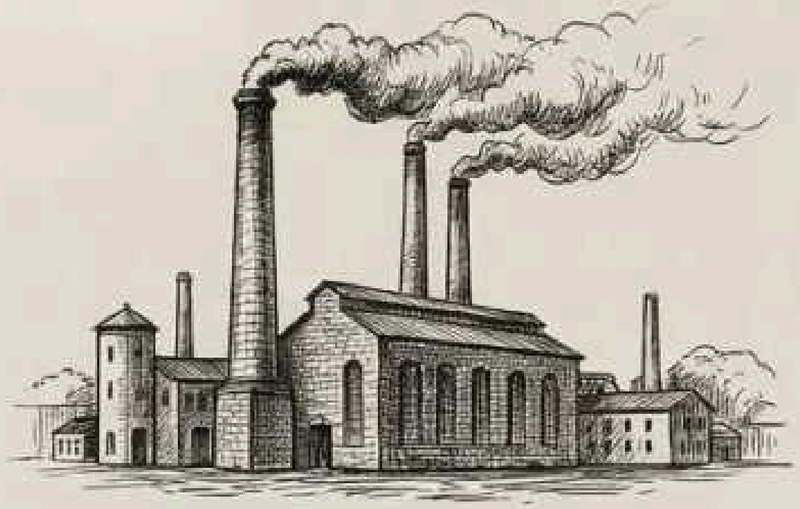
Modern societies describe themselves as class systems, but the family you are born into still matters a great deal.

# Classic Accounts of Class

¶ 5.4

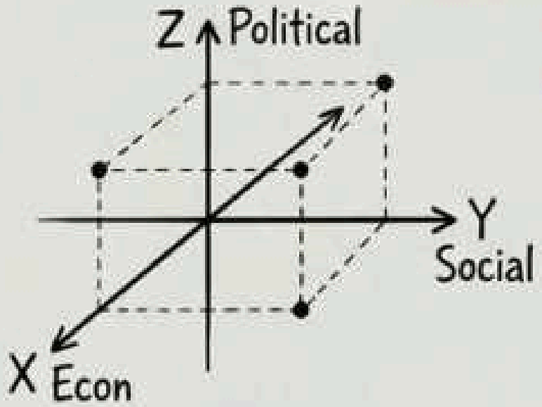
## Karl Marx

Class = $f$(Relationship to Means of Production)



Class depends on a single relationship: owning the means of production vs. selling your labour.

## Max Weber




Stratification = Class(Econ) + Status(Social) + Party(Political)

Stratification has three distinct dimensions: economic position, social honour, and political power. (A person may rank high on one and low on another).

# The Divide Between Income and Wealth

¶ 5.5



## Income (The Faucet)

What you earn in a period.

## Wealth (The Reservoir)

$$\text{Wealth} = \sum(\text{Assets}) - \sum(\text{Liabilities})$$

What you own, minus what you owe.

Key Insight: Wealth is far more unequally distributed than income. It can be inherited, meaning advantages and disadvantages accumulate across generations. Modern measures also include education and occupation to define socioeconomic status.

# Bourdieu and the Elements of Advantage

¶ 5.6

Total Advantage =



## Economic Capital

→ Money and assets.

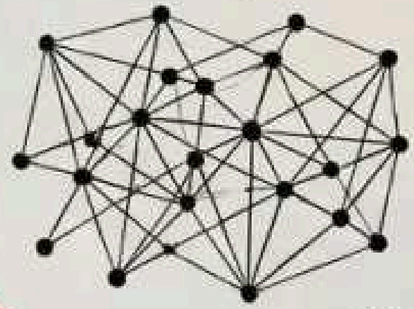
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## Cultural Capital

→ Knowledge, manners, tastes, and credentials signaling higher-class membership.

\+



## Social Capital

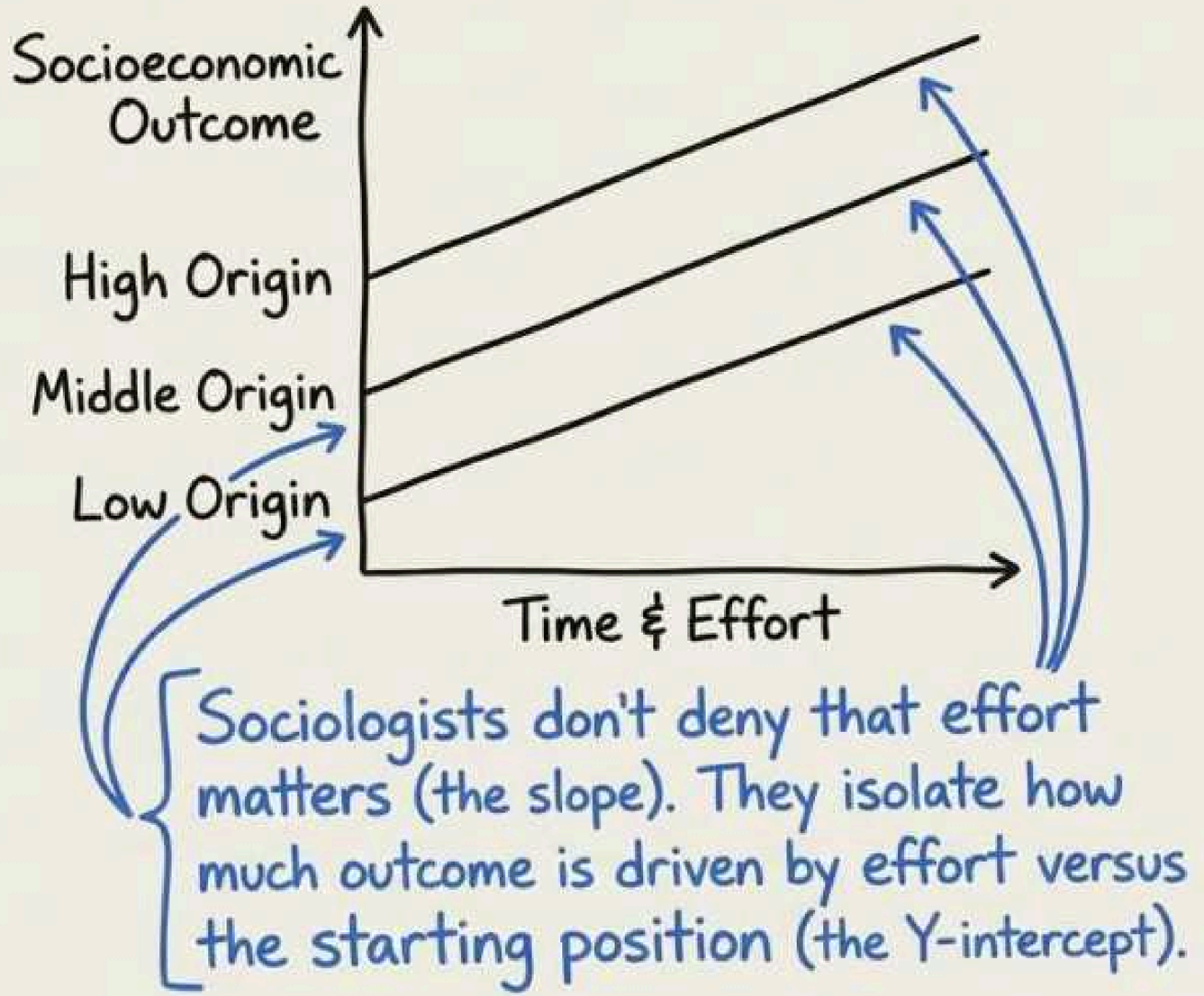
→ The **value** of the networks you belong to.

Children from advantaged homes arrive **speaking the language schools reward**. A **system appearing to reward merit** may actually *reproduce privilege*.

# Social Mobility and the Starting Line

¶ 5.7

- The American Dream assumes anyone working hard can rise.
- Mobility exists (people move up and down).
- Chances depend heavily on where one starts, varying by country and over time.



# The Expression of Poverty

¶ 5.8

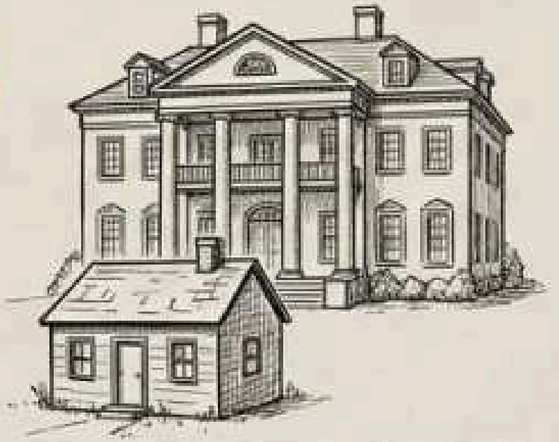
## Absolute Poverty

Lacking basic necessities of life.



## Relative Poverty

Falling well below the standard of living of the society.



## Causes of Poverty

Individual choices and culture

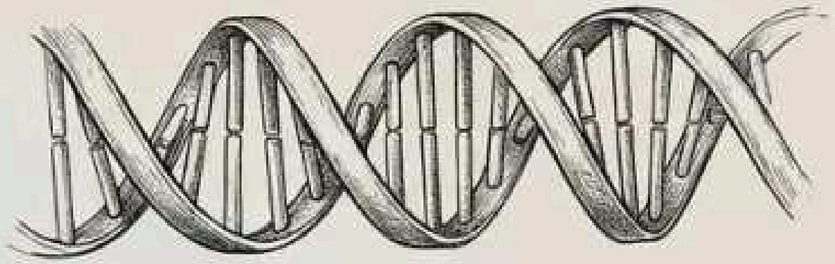
Structural labour markets, schooling, discrimination

Modern Consensus: Poverty is the interaction of both structure and agency.

# Race as a Social Construction

¶ 5.9

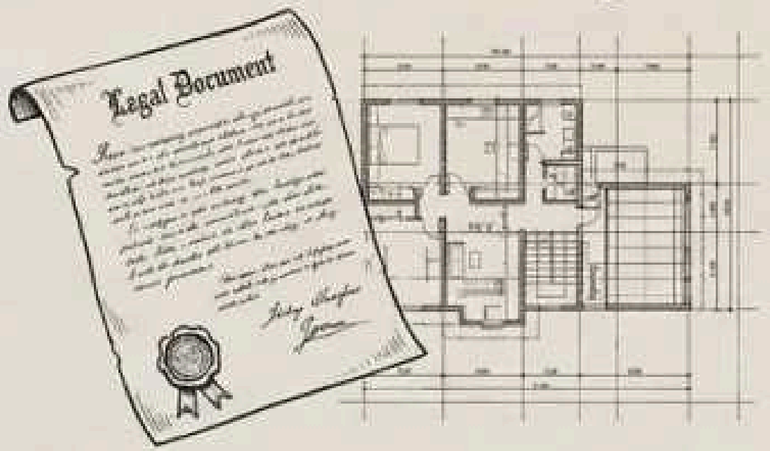
## Biological Reality



Biologists find human beings share the great majority of their genes.

Traditional racial categories do not correspond to sharply bounded genetic groups.

## Social Reality




Race is a category created by societies and given meaning through history, law, and custom.

Constructed does not mean unreal. Social categories have deeply real consequences for how people are treated.

# The Mechanics of Inequality

¶5.10

**1. Prejudice**
(Mind/Attitude)

A rigid, negative attitude toward a group.

↓

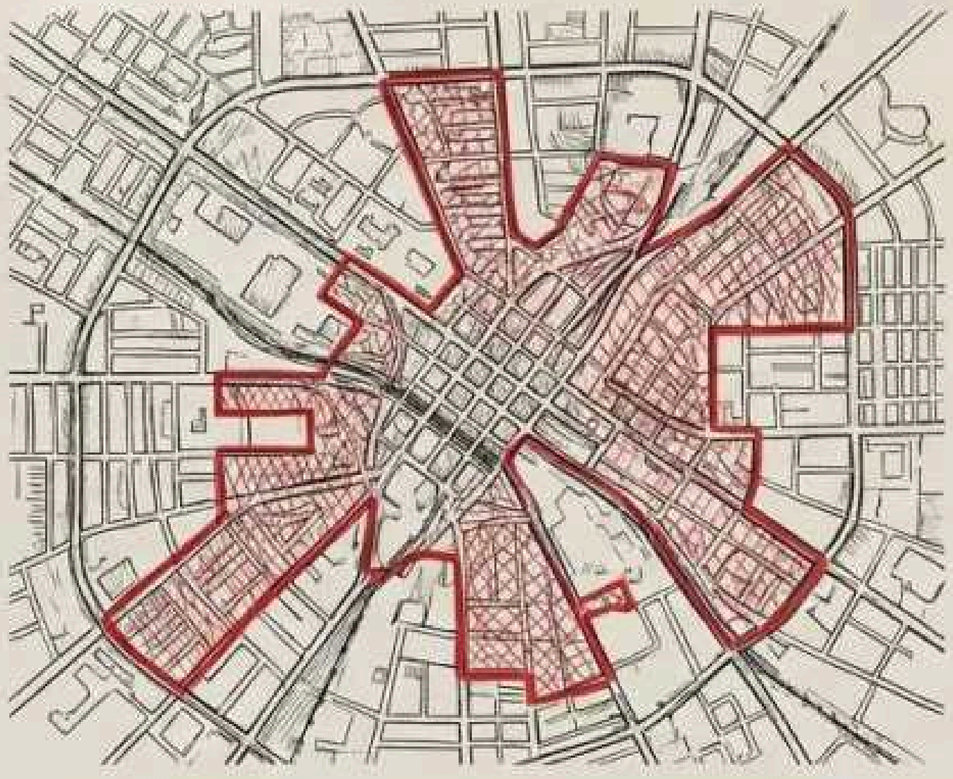
**2. Discrimination**
(Action/Treatment)

Unequal treatment of people because of their group.

↓

**3. Racism & Institutional Discrimination**
(System)

Beliefs and practices treating groups as inherently inferior, built directly into institutions.



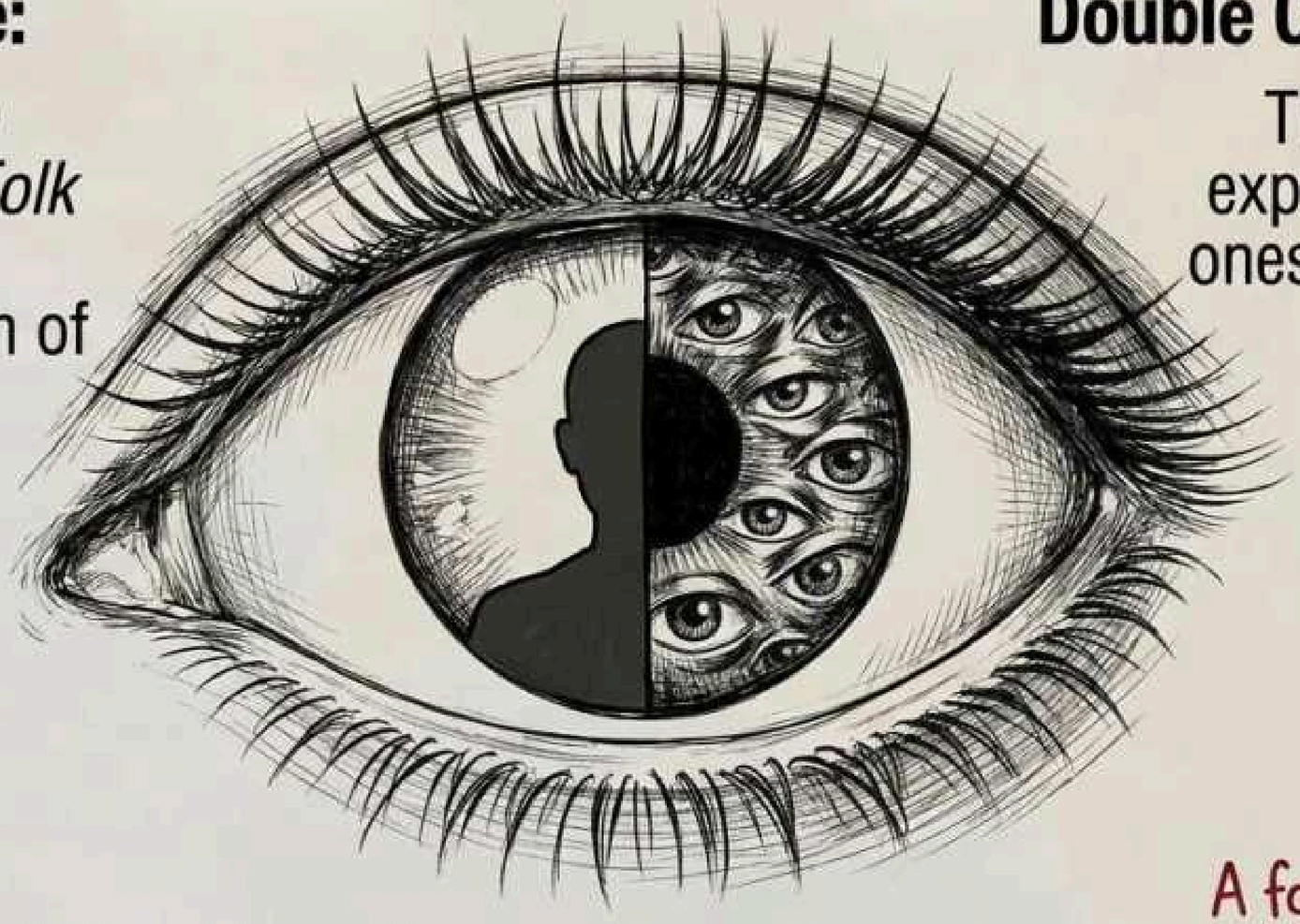
Key Insight: Institutional discrimination can persist even when no individual intends harm (e.g., historical housing policies shaping neighbourhoods for decades).

# W.E.B. Du Bois and Double Consciousness

¶ 5.11

**The Color Line:**

Identified in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) as the defining problem of the twentieth century.



**Double Consciousness:**

The psychological experience of seeing oneself through one's own eyes, while simultaneously seeing oneself through the eyes of a society that looks on with contempt.

A founding contribution to American sociology.

# The Dynamics of Intergroup Relations

¶ 5.12

$$A + B + C \rightarrow A$$

**Assimilation:** A minority adopts the majority culture.

$$A + B + C \rightarrow A + B + C$$

**Pluralism:** Groups keep distinct identities within one society.

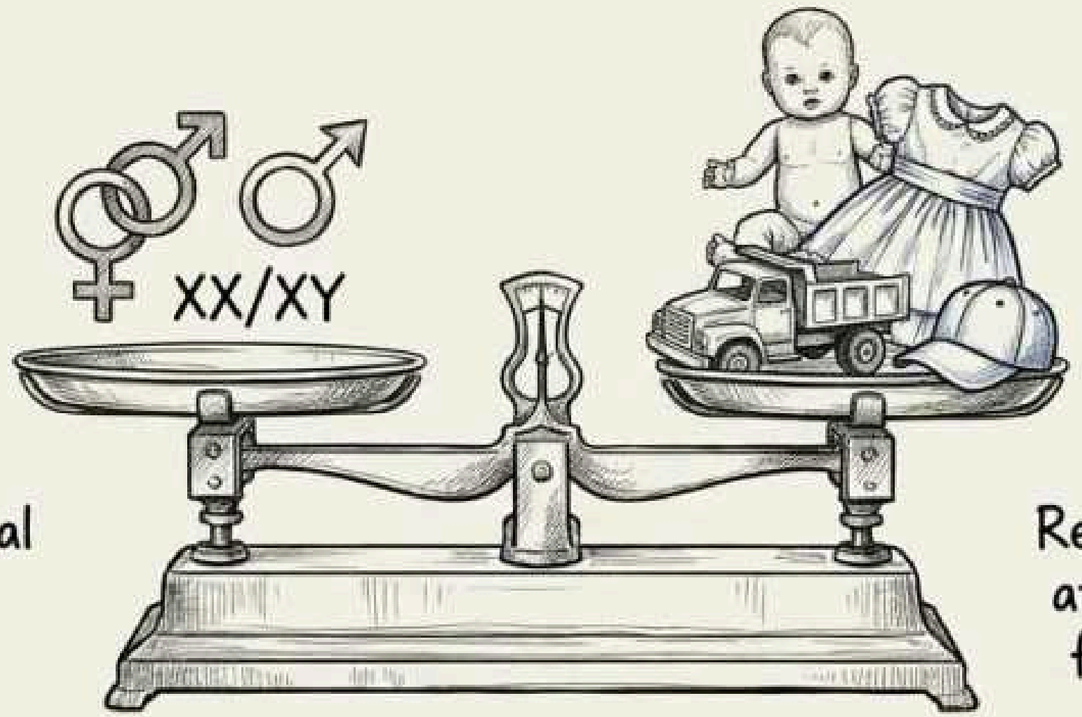
A | B | ~~C~~

**Extreme Outcomes:** Segregation, expulsion, or genocide.

Which pattern emerges depends on history, economics, and power.
Today, immigration continues to reshape how these categories are understood.

# Distinguishing Sex and Gender

¶ 5.13




## Sex

Refers to biological differences.

## Gender

Refers to the social meanings attached to being male, female, or otherwise.

The Socialization Process: Societies teach gender from earliest childhood through toys, clothing, language, and expectations.

Proof of Learning: Because cultures differ vastly in what they treat as masculine or feminine, this is strong evidence that gender is learned.

# Dimensions of Gender Inequality

¶ 5.14

## The Pay Gap = (Occupations + Hours) + Unexplained Penalty

Women's pay remains lower on average, driven partly by hours/occupation, and partly by factors not explained by either.



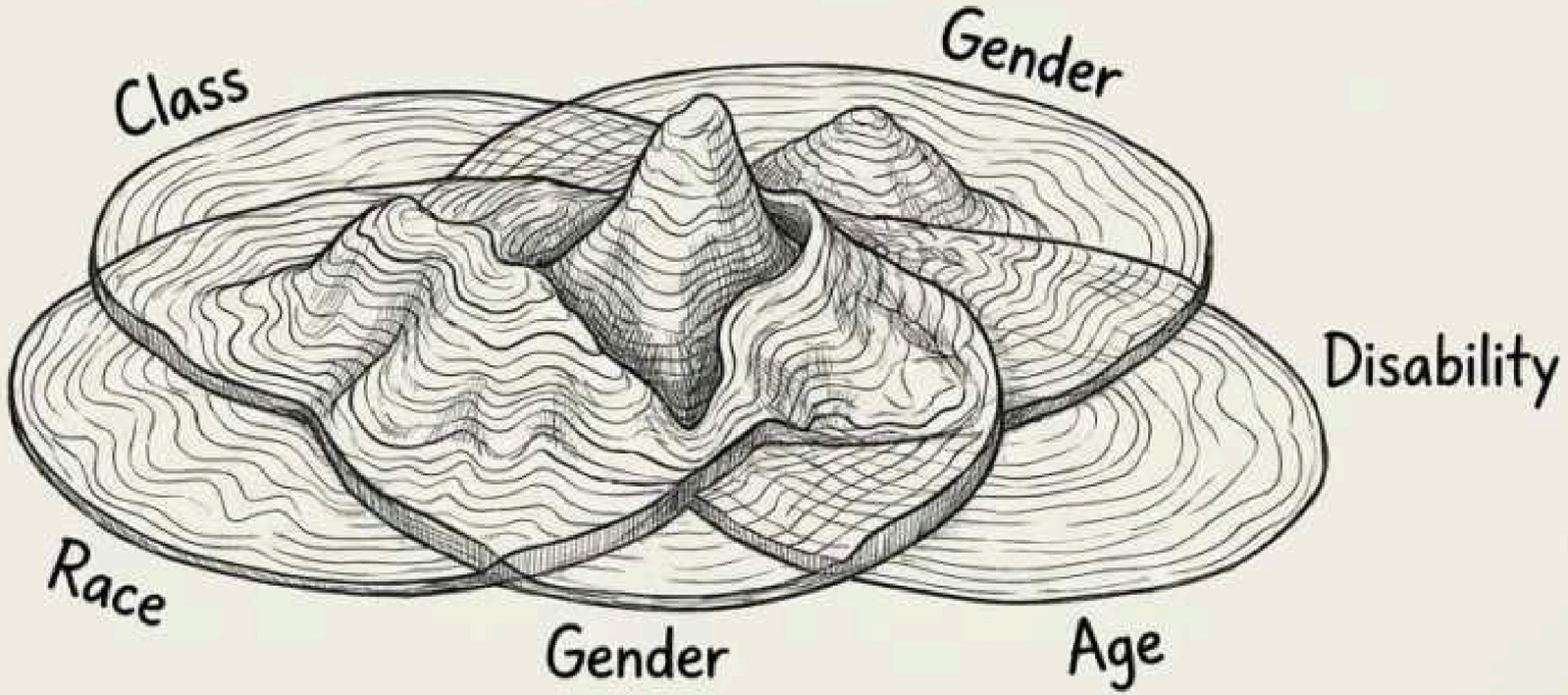

### Historical Context Note:

Across most countries, women have historically had less political power, fewer paid opportunities, and a vastly larger share of unpaid care.

# Crenshaw's Intersectionality (1989)

¶ 5.15

## Experience of a Black Woman ≠ Being Black + Being a Woman

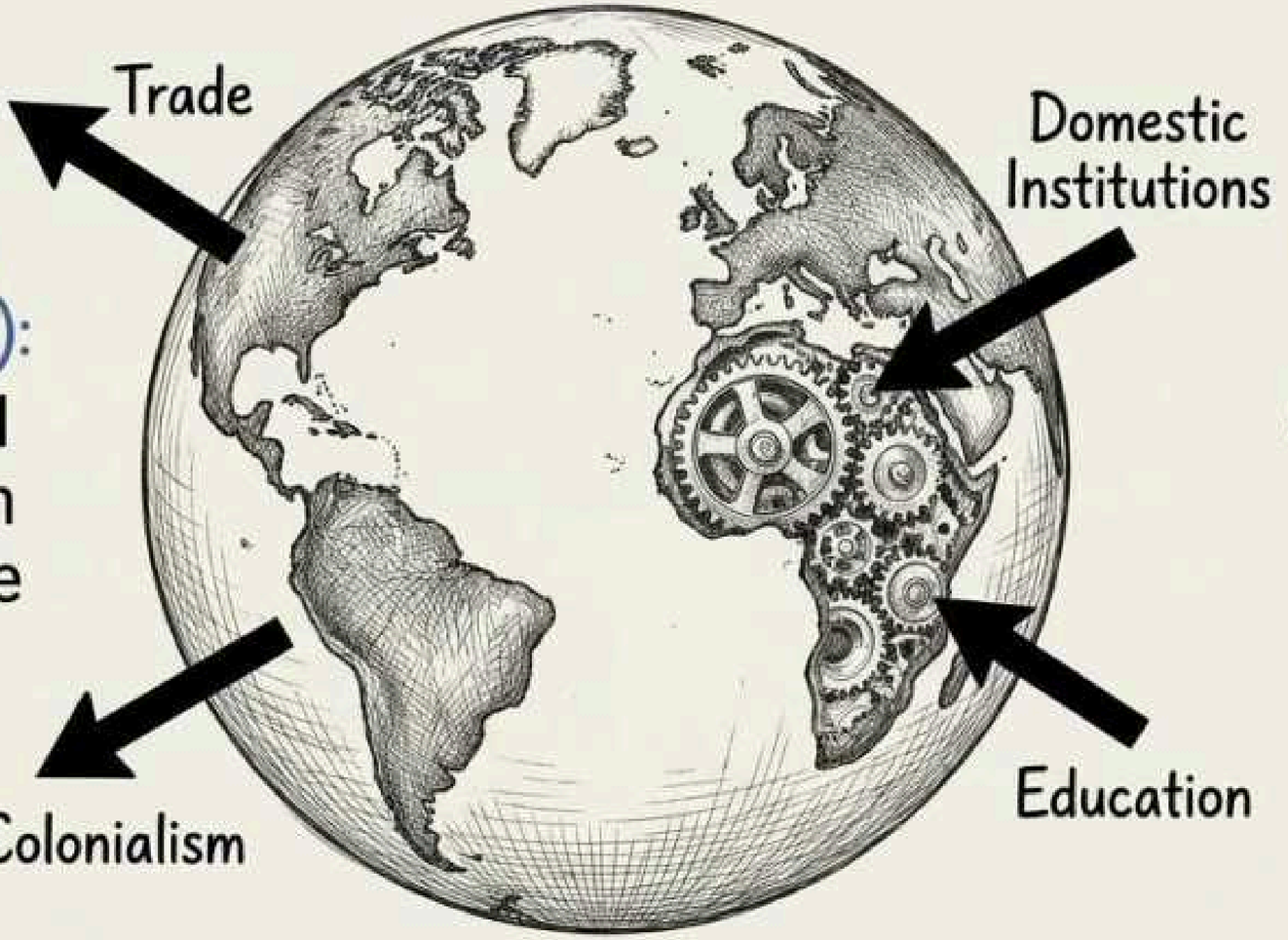



Core Concept: Systems of inequality overlap. They combine in ways that create entirely distinct, synthesized patterns of disadvantage and privilege that cannot be understood in isolation.

# Macro-Lens: Global Inequality

¶ 5.16

**External Forces (World-Systems & Dependency Theory):** Points to historical external extraction as the cause of the gap between rich and poor nations.




**Internal Forces (Modernization Theory):** Stresses internal factors such as domestic institutions and education.

The debate continues, but evidence suggests both internal and external forces play a critical part.

¶ 5.17

# Lecture Reflection

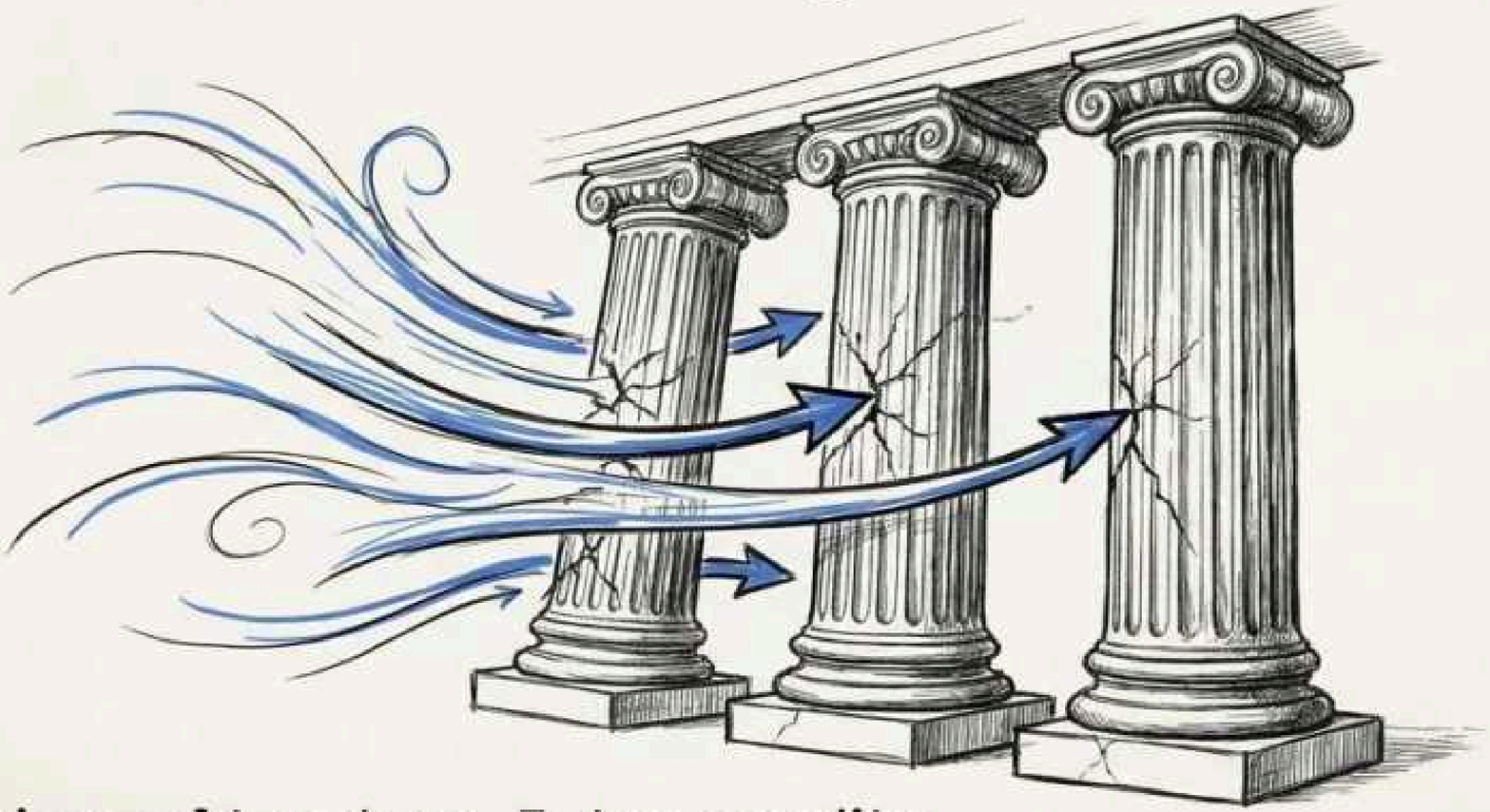


1. Choose one advantage you have had in life (a supportive family, a good school, or a safe neighbourhood).
2. Calculate the ratio: How much of it was your own doing, and how much was part of the position you started from?

**Does the answer change how you think about fairness?**

# Looking Ahead

¶5.18



Conclusion of Lecture 5: Inequality

Next up: In the final lecture, we look at the great institutions of society, and at the forces that change it.