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| **Capital** |  | is the degree to which individuals identify with their socioeconomic class. In some cases, there is low unity at the class level where people focus on other aspects of identity such as religion, ethnicity, gender, culture and lifestyle. |
| **Labor** |  | is the respect that an individual enjoys from others in a particular context. Adherence to the ideals and norms of a class culture can earn an individual respect from their peers. There are many types of status and it is a mistake to equate status and wealth. |
| **Disposable Income** |  | Social classes develop this through an ongoing process of shared experience. This can include values, language, norms, expectations, symbols, myths, stories and pastimes that allow people to identify with each other as a class. |
| **Leisure Class** |  | is the degree to which a society provides opportunities for people to improve their economic situation such that they may join a higher social class. For example, a society that makes elite universities free and ensures that admissions are based on merit would make it possible for individuals from lower social classes to move up in the world. |
| **Quality of Life** |  | is often the key to sustaining a family’s position in a social class. For example, elite universities signal inclusion in the upper class. University education is also required to join many middle class professions. Likewise, training such as apprenticeships may be a route to the middle class. |
| **Education** |  | Generally speaking, capital and disposable income allow individuals and families to make improvements in their lives. For example, purchasing homes that are further from major sources of air pollution such as highways and ports. |
| **Social Mobility** |  | Historically, the upper class had far more available spare time than the other classes as they do not depend on their labor for survival. As such, available spare time was associated with wealth with activities such as afternoon tea that intentionally burned the core hours of the day, an unthinkable luxury for the other classes. This pattern persists to this day as the upper and middle class have the expectation of holidays, vacations, hobby time and family time where the working poor may struggle each day just to do the things they need to do to survive. |
| **Culture** |  | Where pay for labor is high, workers enjoy this money. This is important as it allows families to make improvements in their life and build up capital. This money is the defining characteristic of the middle class. |
| **Social Status** |  | Classes that don't own capital depend on this effort. In many cases, this means working for those who own capital creating a hierarchical power structure in a society. |
| **Class Consciousness** |  | is property that has potential to produce future value such as land, buildings, equipment, machines, vehicles, software and intellectual property. The upper classes of society are primarily defined by their ownership of property. This allows these classes to support a lavish lifestyle that is not based on the output of their labor but rather returns from this property. |
| **Politics** |  | Where class consciousness is strong the largest classes by population can dominate politics to create policies and direct the resources of a society in ways that benefit them. For example, a social market economy is largely structured to benefit the working and middle class with benefits such as healthcare, education and a social safety net that can theoretically be funded with taxation of the upper class and related entities such as corporations. |