

**Duke University**

**Department of Sociology**

**GRADUATE QUALIFYING EXAMINATION  
SOCIAL STRATIFICATION**

**August 29, 2005 – August 30, 2005**

This examination has three questions. You must answer all three questions. Your answers should be as complete as possible. Each answer should be approximately five pages long (double-spaced, 1" margins, 12 point font) and the complete exam should be about 15 pages long (excluding the references). Please follow a journal format for references and citations (e.g. American Sociological Review). Avoid excessive duplication of material across answers.

You have 24 hours from the time you receive your exam to return it to Claudette Parker as an email attachment.

No discussion about any Qualifying Examination with any other person is permitted until after September 2, 2005.

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1. Choose one of the major perspectives or theoretical traditions in the “General Theories and Approaches” section of the reading list (e.g. life course, Marxist, Weberian, etc.). Briefly, identify and explain the core arguments and ideas of this perspective or theory. Then, apply this perspective or theory to your two areas of sub-specialization. Illustrate how it has influenced theoretical debates and empirical inquiry in those sub-fields with examples. Discuss the prospects of this perspective or theory for thriving or declining in the future of stratification research.
2. Provide an argument for why one method or methodological technique has been especially important for the past 10-15 years of research on social stratification. Explain the method and illustrate its application across several areas within the stratification list. Offer an account for why it has been so important and project whether it will or should continue to be particularly important in the future of the field.
3. Select one of your areas of sub-specialization and identify one unresolved problem that involves contrasting theoretical arguments in the literature. Briefly explain the main arguments and how they differ in accounting for the problem. What hypotheses can you formulate? Then, propose a study that can empirically adjudicate between the contrasting arguments. Be sure to make clear what sort of evidence would be necessary to support or refute the contrasting arguments. Offer a feasible research design including the operationalization of key concepts, the primary or secondary data to be collected, and analytical techniques or methods to be deployed.