

Sociology 125
Lecture 11: Thinking about equality, inequality and fairness
October 16, 2006

I. What does it mean to talk about “fairness” and “justice”?

II. The justice and injustice of economic inequalities

1. Fair play vs Fair shares
2. Fair play as the dominant American view.
 - Fundamental problem: the fate of children

III. Complications: defenses of “unjust” Inequality

1. The problem of conflicting values
2. The Pragmatic issue: How much inequality “good” for society?
 - a. Pragmatic argument in favor of high levels of inequality:
 - b. Criticism of the pragmatic defense of high inequality
 - c. Pragmatic arguments against high inequality

IV. The Concept of “Exploitation”

1. Shmoo story
2. The Preference ordering for the fate of the Shmoo
3. Exploitation and Antagonism of interests
4. formal definition of exploitation
5. oppression vs exploitation
6. Illustration: Indigenous people in South Africa vs U.S.