

The Great Canadian Class Study aims to understand if class still matters, whether it is linked to income and wealth or other factors, and what it means for societal trends and the future of Canada.

© iStockphoto/Shutterstock.com

# Sociology

with Dr Zohreh BayatRizi,  
Dr Michelle Maroto  
and Dr Guillaume Durou

## Talking points

### Knowledge & Comprehension

1. What do sociologists study?
2. Why is class a less clear concept now compared to a century ago?
3. What are economic capital, social capital and cultural capital?
4. What data collection techniques did Zohreh, Michelle and Guillaume use for the Great Canadian Class Study (GCCS)?

### Application

5. "What is the relationship between inequality, social class identity and political affiliation?" What kind of relationships do you think the team might discover between these factors? Justify your answer with real-world examples.

### Analysis

6. The team found that processing and analysing interview answers took more time and resources than processing and analysing the questionnaire answers, even though far fewer respondents were involved. Why do you think this was?
7. How do you think a policymaker might use the GCCS findings to inform their policies? Give possible examples.

### Evaluation

8. In your opinion and based on your own experiences, to what extent do you think class remains a useful concept for understanding society, and why?
9. How do you think social media has changed our social relationships? What kinds of questions do you think sociologists ask when investigating emerging trends such as the use of social media?

## Activity

Zohreh, Michelle and Guillaume partnered with a research firm called Angus Reid Institute to distribute their survey. The survey questions led to the development of a 'class calculator'. The team is not gathering data from this source but is for people's own interest. You can find the calculator on the institute's website: [angusreid.org/great-canadian-class-survey](https://angusreid.org/great-canadian-class-survey)

The class calculator is designed for adults, so if you are still in high school, you may want to take it from the perspective of a parent or caregiver. It is also designed specifically for Canadians but is largely applicable to people around the world.

If you are in the UK, there is also an older UK version, which inspired the Angus Reid class calculator: [bbc.co.uk/news/special/2013/newsspec\\_5093/index.stm](https://bbc.co.uk/news/special/2013/newsspec_5093/index.stm)

Reflect on your results:

- To what extent do you agree with them? Do they align with your own social class identity? Do you feel you belong to the same social class as your grandparents, parents and peers?
- How comfortable are you thinking about class in this way?
- Why might discussing class and tools such as the class calculator make people feel uncomfortable? How sensitive/difficult do you and your peers find talking about class, and why?
- How important is class to you?
- How relevant do you think the concept of class is for the community you live in, and why?

## More resources

- Social inequality in Canada rose sharply during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Michelle wrote an opinion piece that explores how this happened and how we can remedy the situation: [federationhss.ca/en/blog/were-not-all-together-what-we-can-learn-pandemic-response-disability-and-social-stratification](https://federationhss.ca/en/blog/were-not-all-together-what-we-can-learn-pandemic-response-disability-and-social-stratification)
- In this article, Michelle and colleagues explore how remote and in-person work affect inequality: [theconversation.com/as-back-to-school-season-approaches-canadian-employers-are-making-a-mistake-by-mandating-workers-back-to-the-office-263251](https://theconversation.com/as-back-to-school-season-approaches-canadian-employers-are-making-a-mistake-by-mandating-workers-back-to-the-office-263251)
- This article explores what 'middle class' means in the modern world in Canada, including reference to GCCS findings: [cbc.ca/news/canada/middle-class-voters-1.7494434](https://cbc.ca/news/canada/middle-class-voters-1.7494434)
- This video is on the same theme: [youtube.com/watch?v=5Ob1pylhsw](https://youtube.com/watch?v=5Ob1pylhsw)