



Understanding Social Divisions

Shaun Best

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The study of social divisions has dominated research within the social sciences since the nineteenth century. Early stratification categories of class, race, and gender, have in more recent years been joined by issues such as sexuality and disability. **Understanding Social Divisions** addresses the full range of social divisions in one volume while also considering the nature of social division in itself, in a comprehensive and accessible overview.

Shaun Best: outlines and evaluates theories and research from a long historical period

looks at how social divisions influence the formation of identity and 'the other'; discusses the mechanisms that are drawn upon to maintain social divisions; considers how solidarity is maintained given that most people in society may feel in some way divided from the rest of society; and, explores how individuals place themselves within the social divisions of class, gender, sex and sexuality, race and ethnic diversity, disability and mental illness.

The concluding chapter explores the role of the State in the processes of social division, in areas such as: asylum, citizenship, childhood, old age, disease and policing of terrorism.

This book is essential reading for students of social divisions from a wide variety of social science backgrounds.

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