

44 Even so, the correlation* between inequality and social problems remains startling. And it is
45 the difference in income rather than the level of poverty that's critical. In the USA some 13%
46 of the population fall below the poverty line: yet of those who come into this category, 80%
47 have air-conditioning, 33% have a dishwasher and 50% have two or more cars. Which is not
48 quite what some other countries might call poverty.

49 What is it about unequal societies that causes the damage? Wilkinson believes the answer
50 lies in the psycho-social areas of hierarchy and status. The greater the difference between
51 the haves and have-nots, the greater importance everyone places on the material aspects of
52 consumption. What brand of car you drive carries far more meaning in a more hierarchical
53 society than in a flatter one. Status anxiety finds expression in crime, ill-health and mistrust,
54 thereby corroding society.

55 Adapted from John Crace, The Guardian, Thursday 12 March 2009

Words

anomaly - Ausnahme

cohesion - Zusammenhalt

correlation - Zusammenhang

homicide - Mord

obesity - Fettleibigkeit

1 Comprehension

Answer the following questions.

1. Name three problems which characterize modern societies. How do governments usually try to solve such problems?
2. What do Wilkinson and Pickett think about these government initiatives?
3. What should be done in their opinion?
4. How can obesity be used as an example for Wilkinson's and Pickett's theory?
5. In which way do people lose out in unequal societies?
 - a) the poor
 - b) the wealthier people
6. What is special about smoking and suicide rates?
7. What according to Wilkinson causes the damage in unequal societies?

2 Translation

Translate into German: lines 11-25 (beginning with "Wilkinson, a retired professor from Nottingham...")

3 Writing

Describe life in a more equal society compared to a less equal one.

What needs to happen so we can live in a more equal society? Make some suggestions and consider the limitations of your suggestions.