

CHAPTER 1

Studying Social Problems in the Twenty-First Century

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. According to sociologists, a social problem is a social condition or a pattern of behaviour that
 - a. individuals must take action to solve themselves.
 - b. systematically advantages a significant number of people
 - c. everyone agrees is harmful for all individuals and the society.
 - d. often is of relatively short duration and problematic only for those who are affected by it.
 - e. people believe warrants public concern and collective action to bring about change.

Answer: e Page: 2 Difficulty: E

2. According to the text, social phenomena—such as violence—typically become defined as a social problem when
 - a. they systematically disadvantage or harm a significant number of people and are seen as harmful by a number of “significant” people.
 - b. they systematically disadvantage or harm a number of “significant” people
 - c. the people most affected by the problem demand social change.
 - d. the social problem becomes seen as harmful by a significant number of people.
 - e. it is of relatively short duration.

Answer: a Page: 2 Difficulty: M

3. A sociological examination of social problems focuses primarily on
 - a. society
 - b. individual attitudes
 - c. political decisions
 - d. individual behaviour
 - e. cultural differences

Answer: a Page: 2 Difficulty: M

4. The text defines discrimination as
 - a. a negative or unfavourable attitude towards a group or its individual members.
 - b. a positive or favourable attitude towards a group or its individual members’ stereotyped beliefs that are not tested against reality.
 - c. actions or practices of subordinate group members that have a harmful impact on members of dominant groups.
 - d. actions or practices of dominant group members that have a harmful impact on members of subordinate groups.

Answer: e Page: 3 Difficulty: E

5. Sociologist C. Wright Mills referred to the private problems of individuals as
- social problems.
 - personal troubles.
 - individual concerns.
 - public issues.
 - public policy

Answer: b Page: 5 Difficulty: E

6. According to C. Wright Mills, widespread unemployment resulting from changes in the national economy is
- a political problem
 - a personal problem.
 - a public issue.
 - not a social problem since it will be corrected with the next change in the economy.
 - a problem for those who are unemployed but not for employed people.

Answer: c Page: 5 Difficulty: C

7. The ability to see the relationship between individual experiences and the larger society is the definition of
- collective empathy.
 - social organization.
 - sociology
 - the sociological imagination.
 - common-sense knowledge.

Answer: d Page: 5 Difficulty: E

8. According to functionalists, social problems arise when
- there are discrepancies between ideal and real culture in society.
 - people identify certain behaviour as a social problem and label those who engage in the behaviour as “problems.”
 - institutions do not fulfill their functions or when dysfunctions occur in social institutions.
 - individuals do not function properly within a given society.
 - social organization is strong and cohesive

Answer: c Page: 6 Difficulty: M

9. Functionalists use the term _____ to refer to the unintended consequences of an activity or social process.

- a. dysfunction
- b. latent function
- c. manifest function
- d. social disorganization
- e. latent dysfunction

Answer: b Page: 7 Difficulty: E

10. According to value-conflict theorists, social problems occur when
- a. there are discrepancies between the ideal and real culture in society.
 - b. there are major contradictions based on gender, racialization and class.
 - c. there is a high level of social disorganization.
 - d. there are too few people following the rules of society.
 - e. there are too many people following the rules of society.

Answer: a Page: 8 Difficulty: M

11. Karl Marx believed that
- a. under capitalism, workers gain benefits they otherwise would not have.
 - b. capitalism contributed to increased levels of impoverishment among workers.
 - c. workers were too weak and disorganized to overthrow the capitalist economic system.
 - d. some workers would eventually become capitalists.
 - e. capitalism contributed to decreased levels of impoverishment.

Answer: b Page: 9 Difficulty: M

12. According to sociologist Georg Simmel, rapid industrialization and urbanization
- a. greatly enhanced the fortunes of wealthy capitalists.
 - b. broke up the “geometry of social life.”
 - c. had little impact on most people’s daily lives.
 - d. caused massive social disorganization in urban areas.
 - e. caused massive social organization in urban areas.

Answer: b Page: 10 Difficulty: M

13. The process by which people’s perception of reality is shaped by the subjective meanings that they give to an experience reflects Berger and Luckman’s (1967) concept of
- a. the situational approach
 - b. the social construction of reality
 - c. the sociological imagination
 - d. the situational transaction
 - e. critical conflict perspective

Answer: b Page: 10 Difficulty: M

14. Feminist analysts believe that issues of violence are fundamentally issues of

- a. sexism
- b. classism
- c. homophobia
- d. inequalities in power
- e. racism

Answer: d Page: 12 Difficulty: M

15. When individuals operate within small groups to try and remedy a problem that affects them, their family, or their friends, they are employing or seeking what type of solution to social problems?
- a. micro level solutions
 - b. mid-range solutions
 - c. grassroots solutions
 - d. macro level solutions
 - e. collective behaviour

Answer: a Page: 15 Difficulty: E

16. Self-help groups are an example of _____ approaches for reducing social problems.
- a. micro level
 - b. mid-range
 - c. macro level
 - d. individual
 - e. societal

Answer: b Page: 15 Difficulty: E

17. According to the text, a major limitation of micro- and mid-level approaches to reducing social problems is
- a. not enough emphasis is placed on the part that individuals must play in solving their own problems.
 - b. efforts at this level typically lack the sustained capacity to produce changes at the national or international levels.
 - c. overemphasis on the structural barriers in society may make social change seem impossible.
 - d. individual responsibility is de-emphasized in favour of a cohesive effort to group change.
 - e. the institutionalization of groups leads them to be complicit in the maintenance of social problems.

Answer: b Page: 15-18 Difficulty: M

18. What do sociologists call voluntary, often spontaneous activity that is engaged in by a large number of people and typically violates dominant group norms and values?
- a. crowds

- b. civil disobedience
- c. social movements
- d. collective behaviour
- e. social change

Answer: d Page: 18 Difficulty: E

19. _____ movements seek to improve society by changing some specific aspect of the social structure.
- a. Religious
 - b. Revolutionary
 - c. Reform
 - d. Alternative
 - e. Radical

Answer: c Page: 19 Difficulty: E

20. A terrorist group with a utopian worldview is an example of a/an _____ movement.
- a. religious
 - b. revolutionary
 - c. reform
 - d. alternative
 - e. radical

Answer: b Page: 19 Difficulty: M

21. Anti-immigration groups are examples of _____ movements.
- a. religious
 - b. resistance
 - c. reform
 - d. alternative
 - e. radical

Answer: b Page: 19 Difficulty: M

22. Many companies have rushed to assure the public that their products and services are environmentally friendly, even when they are not. This practice has been termed
- a. brainwashing
 - b. ecowashing
 - c. greenwashing
 - d. envirowashing
 - e. "whitewashing"

Answer: c Page: 20 Difficulty: E

23. _____ refers to the values and beliefs that people claim they hold.
- a. Real culture
 - b. Ideal culture
 - c. Mass media culture
 - d. Popular culture
 - e. Culture

Answer: b Page: 8 Difficulty: E

24. _____ refers to the values and beliefs people actually follow.
- a. Real culture
 - b. Ideal culture
 - c. Mass media culture
 - d. Popular culture
 - e. Culture

Answer: a Page: 8 Difficulty: E

25. Which of the following involves looking at the differential impacts of social phenomena on males, females, transgendered and non-gendered people?
- a. evolutionary methodology
 - b. gendering
 - c. androcentricity
 - d. power analysis
 - e. gender analysis

Answer: b Page: 14 Difficulty: M

26. What is the alteration, modification, or transformation of public policy, culture, or social institutions over time called?
- a. crowds
 - b. civil disobedience
 - c. social movements
 - d. collective behaviour
 - e. social change

Answer: e Page: 14 Difficulty: M

27. Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) is an example of
- primary groups.
 - grassroots movements.
 - special interest groups.
 - collective behaviour.
 - secondary groups

Answer: b Page: 16 Difficulty: E

28. The Canadian Labour Congress and REAL Women is an example of
- primary groups.
 - grassroots movements.
 - special interest groups.
 - collective behaviour.
 - secondary groups.

Answer: c Page: 17 Difficulty: E

29. _____ argues that social problems arise out of the major contradictions inherent in the way societies are organized
- the situational approach
 - the social construction of reality
 - the sociological imagination
 - the situational transaction
 - critical conflict perspective

Answer: e Page: 8 Difficulty: E

30. _____ argues that violence results from a specific interaction process.
- the situational approach
 - the social construction of reality
 - the sociological imagination
 - the situational transaction
 - critical conflict perspective

Answer: a Page: 8 Difficulty: E

TRUE-FALSE QUESTIONS

1. Survey research is the study of social life in its natural setting: observing and interviewing people.

Answer: False Page: 13

2. Field research is based on the use of a sample of people who are thought to represent the

attributes of the larger population from which they are selected.

Answer: False Page: 13

3. Social problems may be harmful to everyone in society whether they realize it or not.

Answer: True Page: 5

4. Social problems involve significant discrepancies between the ideals of a society and their achievement.

Answer: True Page: 5

5. An act of violence against a person *because* of his or her skin colour or gender or sexual orientation is known as a hate crime.

Answer: True Page: 3

6. C. Wright Mills linked personal problems and public issues in his examination of social problems.

Answer: True Page: 6-7

7. Conflict theorists focus on inequalities in society, whereas functionalists emphasize consensus and shared values.

Answer: True Page: 6-8

8. Interactionists believe that violence can be reduced or eliminated only when we have been able to change societal values that foster excessive competition and aggression.

Answer: True Page: 10

9. Most feminist theory, in the past, as today, employs a White, middle class, educated, and heterosexual female bias.

Answer: False Page: 12

10. Many sociological studies have shown that grassroots and local level activism is a necessary foundation for larger scale social movement activism.

Answer: True Page: 15

11. Secondary analysis of existing data is a research method in which investigators analyze data that originally were collected by others for some other purpose.

Answer: True Page: 13

12. Civil disobedience involves nonviolent behaviour.

Answer: True Page: 18

13. Resistance movements seek to create dramatic, usually political, change.

Answer: False Page: 19

14. Many companies are rushing to assure the public that their products and services are environmentally friendly, even when they are not – a new practice called “greenwashing”.

Answer: True Page: 20

15. According to Weber, verstehen enables individuals to see the world as others see it and to empathize with them.

Answer: True Page: 5

ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. Distinguish between conflict and feminist approaches to studying social problems. How does each perspective differ in the examination of a social problem such as violence? What similarities can you discern between the two perspectives?
2. Using unemployment as an example, describe how micro level, mid-range and macro level approaches would differ in regard to explaining this problem and seeking to reduce or eliminate it.
3. Compare and contrast the five types of social movements discussed in the text. Discuss the strengths and limitations of each in regard to bringing about large-scale social change in societies such as Canada on a social issue of your choice.
4. Discuss criteria used to define whether an issue is a “social problem.” Compare how different nations vary on their criteria for defining social problems.
5. Select a specific social problem and compare how each sociological research method discussed in chapter 1 would study the selected social problem.