

## CHAPTER 1

### Taking a New Look at Social Problems

#### **MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS**

1. According to sociologists, a social problem is a social condition or a pattern of behaviour that:
- individuals typically bring upon themselves; therefore, they must take action to solve their own problems.
  - everyone agrees is harmful for all individuals and the society.
  - often is of relatively short duration and is problematic only for those who are affected by it.
  - people believe warrants public concern and collective action to bring about change.

Answer: d

Page: 3

Difficulty: E

2. Which of the following is false, according to the text, about guns and firearms deaths?
- the province with the highest percentage of gun owning homes is Alberta.
  - the province with the highest percentage of gun owning homes is New Brunswick.
  - the province with the highest number of youth firearms deaths is New Brunswick.
  - each new episode of gun related youth violence sparks renewed calls for tighter gun control.

Answer: b

Page: 3

Difficulty: E

3. According to the text, social phenomena—such as violence—typically become defined as a social problem when:
- they systematically disadvantage or harm a significant number of people and are seen as harmful by a number of “significant” people.
  - they systematically disadvantage or harm a number of “significant” people
  - the people most affected by the problem demand social change.
  - they are seen as harmful by a significant number of people.

Answer: a

Page: 3

Difficulty: M

4. A sociological examination of social problems focuses primarily on:
- society
  - individual attitudes
  - how political decisions affect everyday people.
  - individual behaviour

Answer: a

Page: 3

Difficulty: M

5. Firearms are the \_\_\_\_\_leading cause of death of Canadians aged 15 to 24 years.
- a. second
  - b. third
  - c. fourth
  - d. fifth

Answer: b            Page: 3            Difficulty: E

6. The annual economic cost of gun death and injuries in Canada is estimated to be \_\_\_\_\_ Canadian dollars (CAD).
- a. \$4 billion
  - b. \$5 billion
  - c. \$6 billion
  - d. \$7 billion

Answer: c            Page: 3            Difficulty: E

7. In 2009, the WHO released a report on traffic fatalities. Approximately how many people die each year on the world's roads?
- a. 500,000 people
  - b. 1 million people
  - c. 1.3 million people
  - d. 1.7 million people

Answer: c            Page: 4            Difficulty: E

8. Unless more countries adopt appropriate laws, the WHO expects that traffic fatalities will be the \_\_\_\_\_leading cause of death in 2030.
- a. second
  - b. third
  - c. fourth
  - d. fifth

Answer: c            Page: 4            Difficulty: E

9. The text defines discrimination as:
- a. a negative or unfavourable attitude towards a group or its individual members.
  - b. 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: d            Page: 5            Difficulty: E

10. According to the text, a sociological examination of social problems is all but which of the following?
- a. It is based on commonsense notions about a condition or pattern of behaviour.
  - a. It enables people to gain new insights into themselves.
  - b. It helps people to develop an awareness of the connections between themselves and other people.
  - c. It helps us move beyond commonsense notions.

Answer: a

Page: 6

Difficulty: M

11. Sociologist C. Wright Mills referred to the private problems of individuals as:
- a. social problems.
  - b. personal troubles.
  - c. individual concerns.
  - d. public issues.

Answer: b

Page: 6

Difficulty: E

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

Answer: b

Page: 6

Difficulty: C

13. The ability to see the relationship between individual experiences and the larger society is the definition of:
- a. collective empathy.
  - b. social organization.
  - c. the sociological imagination.
  - d. common-sense knowledge.

Answer: c

Page: 6

Difficulty: E

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

Answer: c

Page: 7

Difficulty: M

15. Functionalists use the term \_\_\_\_\_ to refer to the unintended consequences of an activity or social process.
- dysfunction
  - latent function
  - manifest function
  - social disorganization

Answer: b

Page: 7

Difficulty: E

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

Answer: a

Page: 9

Difficulty: M

17. According to Marx, a relationship between capitalism and social problems is derived from all but which of the following?
- contradictions inherent in the ways societies are organized.
  - the inequality between classes caused by differing relationships to the means of production.
  - the overthrow of capitalism by the proletariat.
  - increased levels of impoverishment and alienation for the proletariat.

Answer: c

Page: 9-10

Difficulty: C

18. Karl Marx believed that:
- under capitalism, workers gain benefits they otherwise would not have.
  - capitalism contributed to increased levels of impoverishment and alienation among workers.
  - workers were too weak and disorganized to overthrow the capitalist economic system.
  - some workers would eventually become capitalists.

Answer: b

Page: 10

Difficulty: M

19. Sociologists who employ a conflict analysis when studying social problems suggest all but which of the following?
- the criminal justice system is biased in favour of the middle and upper classes.
  - violence is unlikely to diminish until inequalities are reduced.
  - violence is part of a larger system of inequality and oppression.
  - certain individuals are inherently attracted to conflict ridden lifestyles.

Answer: d

Page: 10-11

Difficulty: M

20. Which of the following is a demonstrated outcome of the replacement of the 1984 Canadian Young Offenders Act with the 2002 Canadian Youth Criminal Justice Act?
- a. rates of imprisonment have increased.
  - b. transfers to adult court have increased.
  - c. penalties for violent offenders have become harsher.
  - d. none of the above.

Answer: d            Page: 11-12    Difficulty: M

21. 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.

Answer: b            Page: 12            Difficulty: M

22. Which of the following is not reflective of some interactionists’ analysis of social problems:
- a. social problems are linked to the social construction of reality.
  - b. the ways that we define situations determine our reactions to them.
  - c. people and actions are only deviant when labelled thus.
  - d. social problems arise out of the ways that societies are organized.

Answer: d            Page: 13            Difficulty: M

23. Jorge, a recent immigrant to Canada who has grown up in a war torn nation, hears a car back fire while walking along a Canadian street. He immediately throws himself to the ground. This is a classic example of:
- a. the sociological imagination.
  - b. the situational approach.
  - c. The Thomas Theorum.
  - d. the lifestyle-routine activity approach.

Answer: c            Page: 13            Difficulty: C

24. The process by which people’s perception of realty 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

Answer: b            Page: 13            Difficulty: M

25. According to feminist theorists Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley (1992), theories of oppression:
- a. suggest that men and women's situations are different and unequal and that women are actively subordinated and kept disadvantaged by both patriarchal structures and individuals reinforcing sexist socialization and ideologies
  - b. assert that women's situations are not only different from men's but that women are also less privileged and or are disadvantaged in relation to men
  - c. suggest that men and women experience different realities based on their differential locations in most situations
  - d. are the same as theories of difference

Answer: a                      Page: 14                      Difficulty: C

26. In Robert Nash Parker's Situational Approach, participants may proceed through \_\_\_\_\_ stages without any actual violence occurring.
- a. one
  - b. two
  - c. three
  - d. four

Answer: d                      Page: 14                      Difficulty: E

27. All of the following statements regarding feminist approaches are correct, except:
- a. Many feminist theorists point out that mainstream sociological thought is androcentric and Eurocentric.
  - b. All issues are feminist issues.
  - c. Feminist analysts are only interested in gender and patriarchy.
  - d. Many feminist analysts begin their analysis by acknowledging the particular standpoints of those involved in the research.

Answer: c                      Page: 14                      Difficulty: M

28. Looking at the differential impacts of social phenomena on males, females, transgendered and non-gendered people is called:
- a. evolutionary methodology
  - b. gendering
  - c. androcentricity
  - d. power analysis

Answer: b                      Page: 14                      Difficulty: M

29. Feminist analysts believe that issues of violence are fundamentally issues of:
- a. sexism
  - b. classism
  - c. homophobia
  - d. inequalities in power

Answer: d

Page: 15

Difficulty: M

30. Which of the following theories discussed in chapter one often leads its adherents into engaged social action?
- a. functionalist
  - b. conflict
  - c. interactionist
  - d. feminist

Answer: d

Page: 15

Difficulty: E

31. Some people use primary groups to remedy a personal problem. All of the following are characteristics of primary groups, except:
- a. interactions take place over a limited period of time
  - b. face-to-face interactions
  - c. small, less specialized groups
  - d. emotion-based relationships

Answer: a

Page: 16

Difficulty: E

32. 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

Answer: a

Page: 16

Difficulty: E

33. Self-help groups are an example of \_\_\_\_\_ approaches for reducing social problems.
- a. micro level
  - b. mid-range
  - c. macro level
  - d. individual

Answer: b

Page: 17

Difficulty: E

34. All of the following are characteristics of various social movements, except:
- a. a group that seeks to promote social change
  - b. a group that resists social change
  - c. a group that engages in collective action
  - d. a group that has become institutionalized

Answer: d

Page: 18

Difficulty: M

35. 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 that 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.

Answer: b

Page: 16-20

Difficulty: M

36. The Canadian Labour Congress and REAL Women are examples of:
- a. primary groups.
  - b. grassroots movements.
  - c. special interest groups.
  - d. collective behaviour.

Answer: c

Page: 20-21

Difficulty: E

37. Sociologists refer to voluntary, often spontaneous activity that is engaged in by a large number of people and typically violates dominant group norms and values as:
- a. crowds
  - b. civil disobedience
  - c. social movements
  - d. collective behaviour

Answer: d

Page: 21

Difficulty: E

38. \_\_\_\_\_ movements seek to improve society by changing some specific aspect of the social structure.
- a. Religious
  - b. Revolutionary
  - c. Reform
  - d. Alternative

Answer: c

Page: 21

Difficulty: E



39. A terrorist group with a utopian worldview is an example of a/an \_\_\_\_\_ movement.
- a. religious
  - b. revolutionary
  - c. reform
  - d. alternative

Answer: b

Page: 22

Difficulty: M

40. Anti-immigration groups and groups like Operation Rescue, which opposes abortion, are examples of \_\_\_\_\_ movements.
- a. religious
  - b. resistance
  - c. reform
  - d. alternative

Answer: b

Page: 23

Difficulty: M

41. Which of the following is not one of the campaigns launched by the national social movement, the Council of Canadians?
- a. A campaign against the Multi-Lateral Agreement on Investment (MAI)
  - b. A campaign against a two-tiered health care system.
  - c. A campaign against combating bank mergers.
  - d. A campaign against control of newspapers by media conglomerates.

Answer: c

Page: 24

Difficulty: C

42. 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

Answer: c

Page: 24

Difficulty: E

43. As proposed by Brecher and Costello, which of the following is not one of the points that should be included in a "human agenda" for the future?
- a. Improvement in the lives of the majority of the world's people.
  - b. Opportunities for action at a variety of levels.
  - c. The development of sustainable communities.
  - d. Integration of the interests of people around the world.

Answer: c

Page: 25

Difficulty: C

## TRUE-FALSE QUESTIONS

1. Derek Powder, speaking about his path to involvement in an Alberta youth gang argued that having the title “tough guy” attached to him at school at a young age was empowering.

Answer: True      Page: 1

2. According to sociologists, the definition of violence includes harm to other people or damage of property.

Answer: True      Page: 2

3. The provinces with the highest percentage of gun owning homes and the highest rate of youth deaths by firearms are Alberta, New Brunswick and Saskatchewan.

Answer: True      Page: 3

4. National polls have shown that people’s perceptions of what constitutes a social problem have changed relatively little over the past 50 years.

Answer: False      Page: 3

5. In 2006, Canadian Police Services reported than an average of more than three young people each day are accused of a gun-related offence and that Canada ranks fifth out of 26 countries for the rate of firearm deaths of children under the age of 14.

Answer: True      Page: 3

6. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) violence is a major cause of death for young people around the world: 14 percent of young males and 7 percent of young females die violently.

Answer: True      Page: 4

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

Answer: True      Page: 4-5

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

Answer: True      Page: 5

9. 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: 5

10. Sociologist Max Weber believed that *verstehen* or insight or understanding is irrelevant for contemporary sociologist's study of social problems.

Answer: False      Page: 6

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

Answer: True      Page: 6

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

Answer: True      Page: 7

13. Evidence supports the conclusion that the creation and implementation of the new Canadian Youth Criminal Justice Act was merely a tool used to ensure political victory by political conservatives.

Answer: True      Page: 10-11

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

Answer: True      Page: 14

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

Answer: True      Page: 14

16. According to the text, when individuals have a problem, many first turn to secondary organizations, such as a community organization, in an effort to solve the problem.

Answer: False      Page: 16

17. Mid-range approaches for dealing with social problems include organizations such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous.

Answer: True      Page: 17

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

Answer: True      Page: 17

19. An example of a recent Pollution Probe was the June 2009 “Nothing is Possible: Clean Air Commute” initiative in the city of Toronto.

Answer: True      Page: 18

20. One of the dangers of creating counter-hegemonies is that new injustices may be created, based on who gets left out of the new reality.

Answer: True      Page: 19

21. In 2009, women in Kenya conducted a sex boycott to protest the chaos and devastation that political parties created after a disputed 2007 election. According to the Centre for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW) report, *The Kenya Sex Boycott* (2009), in the months following the election, more than 1500 people were killed.

Answer: True      Page: 20

22. Civil disobedience involves nonviolent behaviour.

Answer: True      Page: 21

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

Answer: False      Page: 23

24. 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: 24

## ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. Compare and contrast functionalist, conflict, interactionist and feminist perspectives on social problems. Select a specific problem such as unemployment and discuss how each approach might research and explain its causes, effects, and possible solutions.

Difficulty: M

2. 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?

Difficulty: C

3. 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.

Difficulty: E

4. Describe how grassroots groups seek to bring about social change. Using the environmental movement as an example, what are the strengths and weaknesses of grassroots approaches to reducing or eliminating social problems?

Difficulty: M

5. Identify the key factors that distinguish one special interest group from another. Explain why special interest groups are an influential force in Canadian politics in the 21st century.

Difficulty: M

6. Define civil disobedience and explain why this approach is often used by groups protesting certain laws or actions of governmental authorities. Explore the effectiveness of recent civil disobedience strategies at protests. Why are they effective or why are they not? Explain your position.

Difficulty: C

7. 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.

Difficulty: C

8. “Through special interest groups, which are sometimes called pressure groups or lobbies, people seek to change social situations by exerting pressure on political leaders.” Identify and discuss how these special interest groups may be categorized, that is, according to the textbook, what factors play a role in the categorization of these groups?

Difficulty: M

9. Some scholars, including Brecher and Costello (1998) have argued that a “human agenda” is needed to offset existing corporate agendas that have arguably produced a number of social problems. Identify a number of criteria proposed by Brecher and Costello (1998) that are critical in the construction of more “human agenda(s)”.

Difficulty: M