Social Problems 7th edition Macionis Solutions Manual

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CHAPTER 2

ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

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CHAPTER UPDATE

In this seventh edition of the text, <LINK>Chapter 2</LINK> has been retitled to better reflect the current controversy about inequality. There is new discussion about how much (or how little) our current system of taxation reduced economic inequality. New discussion explores the consequences of income inequality for longevity. There is more about cultural capital as well as economic capital. Finally, there is discussion of the new policy of "income transparency." There are updates on all the economic inequality data, including income and wealth, poverty, CEO earnings, taxation, and income data are linked to gender, race, and ethnicity throughout. The revised chapter has fifty new research citations.

The new REVEL learning experience includes informative readings, engaging video, high quality assessment, as well as a supplementary learning material on almost every page.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

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Is economic inequality a problem? Almost all sociologists think that it is. And there is little question about the fact that economic inequality is increasing. Ask students do they think some who enroll in any particular course deserve a higher grade than others. Almost certainly, most will say the answer is "yes." Ask why. My students commonly claim that some students work harder than others; some have more experience with the subject matter than others, and some people may simply be better writers, better test takers, or simply smarter than others. Do similar arguments apply to economic inequality?

In general, as this chapter explains, conservatives say "yes," with many adding that they favor a society with broad opportunity for people to perform and increase their skills over time. Conservatives tend to see the market system as a more-or-less fair arbiter of what people's work is worth. Liberals have doubts that the market judges people fairly. For one thing, because people don't start out in the same place, government programs are needed to level the playing field a little. In addition, markets tend to be dominated by powerful economic interests, which is to say, the rich. Radicals on the left, of course, make a stronger claim that a market system *per se* is going to generate lots of inequality, almost all of which they view as unfair.

In teaching this chapter, remember that there are many facts to convey. But, more important, is the opportunity to think and talk together about how we *define* economic inequality. The political analysis at the end of the chapter provides a comprehensive guide to conservative, liberal, and radical-left thinking about economic inequality, as well as poverty. Finally, throughout our nation's history, the population at large has accepted economic inequality, but people have done so with a catch—everyone should have some reasonable change of improving economic standing. As the Tracking the Trends figure at the beginning of this chapter shows, there has been a very significant erosion of belief in the claim that the United States is a nation of

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economic opportunity. In addition, during the 2016 presidential campaign, both Donald Trump on the right and Bernie Sanders on the left claimed that our economic system was "rigged." Do student think this trend can continue without some major shift in support for our political and economic systems?

CHAPTER OUTLINE

I. Economic Inequality in the United States
2.1 Describe the distribution of income and wealth in the United States.

- Social Stratification
  - Society's system of ranking categories of people in a hierarchy
- Social Classes
  - Categories of people who have similar access to resources and opportunities
- Inequality of Income and Wealth
  - Income
    - Salary or wages from a job plus earnings from investments and other sources
    - Figure 2-1 Distribution of Income in the United States, Figure 2-2 Mean Annual Income for US Families
  - Wealth
    - The value of all the economic assets owned by a person or family, minus any debts
    - Figure 2-3 Distribution of Wealth in the United Sates
- **Social Problems in Focus:** Increasing Economic Inequality: When Does It Become a Problem?
- The Trend toward Increasing Inequality
  - Income inequality is now widely viewed as a social problem. More people wonder whether the highest-paid individuals are really worth what they are receiving.
  - The Occupy Wall Street movement called attention to the very high pay gap
- Taxation
  - Taxation can be a tool to redistribute income and to reduce economic inequality.
  - Progressive taxation
    - A policy that raises tax rates as income increases
  - One reason for the trend toward increasing economic inequality is that our taxation policies are not as progressive as they were back in 1980.
  - Table 2-1 Progressive Tax on Income, 2012

II. The Rich and the Poor: A Social Profile
2.2 Assess the differences in the lives of the rich and poor in the United States.

- The Rich
  - A more useful definition for this category of the population might be people with family income in the top 10 percent of the distribution.

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    - Many in this category have the power to make a difference—they have access to political leaders and they are decision makers in their own right as members of governing boards of businesses and community organizations.
    - An estimate for 2015 placed the wealth of the ten richest individuals in the United States at more than $460 billion, which is as much as 15 million average people, or the entire populations of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Connecticut.
- The Poor
    - The Poverty Line
        - Poverty line, an income level set by the U.S. government for the purpose of counting the poor.
        - In 2012, some 46.5 million people were counted among the poor, resulting in a poverty rate of 15 percent of the U.S. population.
        - The U.S. government uses what might be called an absolute poverty line—one directly linked to the cost of a basic diet. European governments, by contrast, use a relative poverty line, one set at 60 percent of the median income level.
        - Some analysts suggest that, to reach a minimum level of economic security, a U.S. family would need income at least 25 percent higher than the poverty line—something a step or two closer to the European standard.
        - Figure 2-5 The Poverty Rate in the United States
    - The Poverty Gap
        - Poverty gap is the difference between the actual income of the typical poor household and the official poverty line.
- **Personal Stories:** The Reality of Poverty: Living on the Edge
- Who Are the Poor? A Closer Look
    - In 2014, the federal government counted 46.7 million men, women, and children—14.8 percent of the U.S. population—as poor.
    - Age
        - The age category at greatest risk of poverty is children, who make up 35 percent of the U.S. poor.
    - Race
        - Far more white people than black people are poor, and more non-Hispanic than Hispanic people live in poverty.
        - The percentage of minority people who are poor is higher than that of whites.
        - African Americans, Hispanics, and Asian Americans are at higher risk of being poor than whites.
    - Gender
        - Feminization of poverty to refer to the trend of women making up an increasing share of the poor.
    - Family Patterns
        - Being married combines incomes and shares expenses to help build income and wealth. Therefore, marriage greatly reduces the risk of being poor.
    - **Diversity:** Race, Class, and Gender: The United States: A Land of Poor Children
    - Region

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        - Most poor people—just like most affluent people—do live in urban areas. But rural areas have a greater share of the population living below the poverty level than do urban areas.
    - National Map 2-1 Poverty across the United States, 2014
- Working Families: Working Harder
    - Beginning about 1970, many U.S. families found themselves working harder than ever yet feeling that they were falling behind.
    - For a large share of workers, income has nearly stalled. The earnings of a typical 50-year-old man working full time jumped 72 percent between 1958 and 1973. Between 1973 and 2012, however, this same worker's income fell by 14 percent.
- The Working Poor
    - In 2014, according to the government, 16 percent of the heads of poor families worked full time, at least 50 weeks during the year, yet remained below the poverty line.
- The Nonworking Poor
    - Government data show that in 2014, 56 percent of the heads of poor families did not work at all; another 28 percent remained poor while doing part-time work.
- The Underclass
    - Underclass, poor people who live in areas with high concentrations of poverty and limited opportunities for schooling or work.
    - For people who are part of the underclass, the reality of everyday life is persistent poverty.
    - Most people in the United States who are poor are not part of the underclass. For the society as a whole, temporary poverty is more the rule.

III. Problems Linked to Poverty
2.3 Analyze how poverty is linked to other social problems.

- Poor Health
    - There is a strong link between income and health. In fact, there is a good deal of truth in the claim that "wealth means health." Poverty, disease, and illness often go together.
    - Among the poor, infant mortality, the risk of death during the first year of life, is double the rate among affluent people.
    - Because poverty is linked to disease and early death, a nation with excessive economic inequality is likely to have less favorable patterns of health.
- Substandard Housing
    - Better housing is available to those who can pay for it. For this reason, poor people take what is left, sometimes living in crowded homes containing dangerous lead-based paint, faulty plumbing, inadequate heating, and even collapsing walls and crumbling ceilings.
    - The nation's recent housing crisis reduced the wealth of many families and added to the struggle to hold onto good housing.
- Homelessness
    - Homelessness, the plight of poor people who lack shelter and live primarily on the streets, has received a lot of attention.

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    - Conservatives blame homelessness on personal problems such has mental illness.
    - Liberals point to increasing economic inequality.
    - A large majority of homeless people report that they do not work; however, about 18 percent say that they do hold at least a part-time job.
- Limited Schooling
    - Poor children are less likely than rich children to complete high school. Therefore, the odds of going to college are low, and the chances of completing an advanced degree are smaller still.
    - Many schools use some form of tracking, by which the schools divide children into college-bound ("academic") and job-oriented ("vocational") coursework tracks.
- Crime and Punishment
    - Assault, robbery, burglary, auto theft—these so-called "street crimes" are the offenses that get most of the public's attention and are featured most in the mass media.
    - Our society's greater focus on street crime means that the poor are most likely to be arrested, go to trial, and face a prison sentence.
- Political Alienation
    - Many poor people feel alienated from a system that they think does not serve their interests.

IV. Responding to Poverty: The Welfare System
2.4 Explain the changing ways our society has used the social welfare system to respond to poverty.

- Social welfare programs, organized efforts by government, private organizations, or individuals to assist needy people considered worthy of assistance
    - Social welfare programs benefit people or activities defined as worthy.
    - Social welfare programs benefit most of the U.S. population.
    - Overall, social welfare programs reduce economic inequality, but only a little.
    - People in this country like to think they are compassionate, but our cultural emphasis on personal responsibility makes many people uneasy with giving assistance to the poor.
- A Brief History of Welfare
    - The Colonial Era
        - During this period, there was hardly any government at all, and "welfare" was limited to acts of personal kindness between kin and neighbors.
    - The Early Industrial Era
        - In the 1870s, the scientific charity movement (really an early form of sociology) began studying what categories of people were poor, why people were poor, and what could be done to help them.
        - Scientific charity claimed that most poverty was not the fault of the poor themselves but the result of how society operates.
        - Settlement house movement set up home located in the worst slums of a city, where a staff of social scientists and reform-minded activists helped new immigrants get settled in their new surroundings.
    - **Social Policy:** An Undeserved Handout? The Truth about "Welfare"

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  - The Twentieth Century
    - Throughout the 1930s, the federal government enacted many new programs to fight poverty, the most important of which was Social Security. Today, this program provides monthly income to 46 million people, most of whom are elderly.
  - The 1996 Welfare Reform
    - In 1994, the Democratic president and a Republican Congress joined forces to produce the most sweeping welfare reform since the Roosevelt era.

V. Theories of Poverty

2.5 Apply sociological theory to the issues of poverty.

- **Constructing Social Problems:** A Defining Moment: U.S. Society "Discovers" Poverty
- Structural-Functional Analysis: Some Poverty Is Inevitable
  - Social Pathology Theories: Personal Deficiency
    - Some early sociologists argued in favor of a "bad apple" theory that claimed that poverty was the result of personal flaws.
    - Social Darwinism, which viewed society as a competitive arena where the most able became rich and the least able fell into poverty.
    - Culture of poverty, cultural patterns that encourage poverty as a way of life.
    - Meritocracy, a system of social inequality in which social standing corresponds to personal ability and effort.
  - Social Disorganization Theory: Too Much Change
    - Social disorganization, a breakdown in social order caused by rapid social change.
  - Modern Functional Theory: Some Inequality Is Useful
    - Inequality—specifically, differences in the rewards given to people who perform various jobs—is useful for the operation of society.
- Symbolic-Interaction Analysis: Defining the Problem
  - This approach explores how members of a society build an understanding of the causes of poverty and how they view the poor.
  - Blaming the victim, finding the cause of a social problem in the behavior of people who suffer from it
    - Pick an issue that you see as a social problem.
    - Decide how people who suffer from the problem differ from everyone else.
    - Define these differences as the cause of the problem.
    - Respond to the problem by trying to change the victims, not the larger society.
- Social-Conflict Analysis: Poverty Can Be Eliminated
  - It places the blame for poverty in the operation of society itself.
  - Marxist Theory: Poverty and Capitalism
    - Marx pointed to what he called an internal contradiction in the capitalist economy: A system that produced so much ended up making the majority so poor.

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    - More Than Money: Cultural Capital
        - Cultural capital, skills, values, attitudes, and schooling that increase a person's chances of success.
    - Multicultural Theory: Poverty, Race, and Ethnicity
        - The social-conflict approach also includes multicultural theory, which links poverty to race and ethnicity.
- Feminist Analysis: Poverty and Patriarchy
    - This theory begins with the fact of patriarchy, a social pattern in which males dominate females. In practice, patriarchy means that men typically enjoy more wealth, prestige, and power in our society than women do.
    - The Feminization of Poverty
        - As feminists see it, the underlying factor that links gender and poverty is that, even as more and more women have entered the labor force, U.S. society still provides more income, wealth, power, and prestige to men than to women.
    - Intersection Theory: Multiple Disadvantages
        - Intersection theory, the investigation of the interplay of race, class, and gender often resulting in multiple dimensions of disadvantage.

VI. Politics and Poverty: Constructing Problems and Defining Solutions
2.6 Analyze economic inequality from various positions on the political spectrum.

- Conservatives: Personal Responsibility
    - Conservatives hold the traditional value of self-reliance and therefore they support the idea that people should take responsibility for their personal well-being. They claim that U.S. society still offers opportunity and rewards both individual talent and personal effort.
- Liberals: Societal Responsibility
    - From a liberal point of view, the causes of poverty lie in society rather than in the traits of poor individuals. Most people become poor not because they are lazy or because they make bad choices but because of the way society operates.
- The Radical Left: Change the System
    - Left-radicals point to the increasing economic inequality in the United States—a trend that continues despite the welfare programs supported by liberals—and conclude that government assistance amounts to little more than a bandage applied to the body of a person with a terminal disease.
- Going On from Here
    - Wealth and poverty in the United States have always been controversial, and the trend toward increasing economic inequality only makes the debate more important.
- **Defining Solutions:** Is Social Inequality a Problem?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

2.1 Describe the distribution of income and wealth in the United States.

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2.2 Assess the differences in the lives of the rich and the poor in the United States.

2.3 Analyze how poverty is linked to other social problems.

2.4 Explain the changing ways our society has used the social welfare system to respond to poverty.

2.5 Apply sociological theory to the issue of poverty.

2.6 Analyze economic inequality from various positions on the political spectrum.

DETAILED TEACHING OBJECTIVES

After reading <LINK>Chapter 2</LINK>, students should be able to:

1. Discuss social stratification and social class.

2. Discuss the concept of "life chances" and explain how social class shapes people's life chances.

3. Distinguish between wealth and income. Describe the distribution of each in U.S. society.

4. Identify reasons for the trend toward increasing economic inequality.

5. Distinguish between progressive and regressive taxes.

6. Compare and contrast the social characteristics of the rich and poor in the United States.

7. Discuss the "poverty line" and the "poverty gap."

8. Explain the relationships between poverty and age, race, gender, family patterns, and region.

9. Explain why working families today are working harder and receiving less.

10. Distinguish the working poor, the nonworking poor, and the underclass.

11. Explain how poverty in the United States is linked to poor health, substandard housing, homelessness, limited schooling, crime, and political alienation.

12. Distinguish between conservative and liberal views of the homeless.

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13. Describe the role of the mass media in shaping how the public views crimes committed by the poor versus crimes committed by the wealthy.

14. Define social welfare programs and describe the characteristics of the largest social welfare programs in the United States.

15. Provide an overview of the history of social welfare in the United States.

16. Explain how the welfare system changed as a result of the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act.

17. What do we gain by applying sociology's theoretical approaches to issue of poverty? Provide one criticism or limitation of each theoretical approach.

18. Explain the "feminization of poverty."

19. Explain how one's position on the political spectrum guides the construction of poverty as a social problem as well as solutions to this problem.

JOHN'S CHAPTER CLOSE-UP: HOW OUR NATION DEFINES POVERTY

The so-called "poverty line" is a precise number that is set each year according to whether people are classified as "farm" or "nonfarm" and the number of people in the family or household. But few people have a very good idea of exactly what the poverty line really means. Put another way, even most sociologists do not have a very good understanding of the validity of this concept. As the chapter explains (see, especially, <PG>page 41</PG>), the poverty line is set at a level that may be said to approach absolute poverty—a level of income that is low enough to threaten human nutrition and health. Officials at the Department of Agriculture set the poverty line at about three times what they estimate a family has to spend for a basic, nutritious diet. Under this system, in 2014, the United States had a poverty rate of 14.8 percent of its population.

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The U.S. system of defining "poverty" says nothing about *relative economic standing.* That is, by linking poverty to nutrition, we pay little attention to the fact that some households have far more income than others. In the nations of Western Europe, a different and more left-leaning way of defining poverty is applied that focuses on the poverty of some relative to the national average. While the precise calculations vary from place to place, the general idea is that the poverty line is set at about 60 percent of the median income level. Under such a system, people will be defined as poor not because of their income level in absolute terms, but because their income is too far below that of typical people.

To illustrate this difference, look at the data for the United States for 2014. The official poverty line for a nonfarm family of four was set at $24,230 (defining 14.8 percent of the population as poor). Under the European system, the poverty line would be set at 60 percent of the median family income of $62,000, or $37,200. Using this measure, the extent of our country's "poverty problem" doubles to include about 30 percent of the population.

JOHN'S PERSONAL VIDEO SELECTION

Go to a video website such as YouTube to find a very powerful video for this chapter by searching for "wealth inequality in America." This video, which is just more than six minutes long, provides a very critical account of wealth inequality in the United States. The focus is on not only the extent of economic inequality but how much the reality of this inequality differs from what people think is the case and what they think should be the case. Dynamic graphics make the points very effectively.

Another good, short video that will begin a class discussion of the state of the U.S. middle class today was done by the Pew Research Center. Use a search engine and enter "lost decade of the middle class." This three-minute Pew report points out that the decade from 2000

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to 2010 is the first in the lifetimes of most of us in which "average people's" income did not increase. On the contrary, the middle class suffered a roughly 5 percent decline in household income during this period. As a result, the middle class got smaller—with some people moving up and some moving down. In addition, a large majority of those who remained in the middle class reported that maintaining their lifestyle had become harder than it used to be.

RESEARCH FOR A CUTTING-EDGE CLASSROOM

For each chapter of the text, I am happy to share a short, PowerPoint-based presentation informed by very recent research. These presentations deal with highly current and typically controversial issues that are in the news and are part of the country's political dialogue. Each presentation provides a clear statement of the issue, several slides that present recent research findings from organizations including Pew, Gallup, or other organizations, notes that help instructors develop the importance of the data, and questions for class discussion.

For Chapter 2, there are two PowerPoint presentations. The first explores the perception of wealth inequality in the United States. This presentation contrasts what people *think* is the extent of wealth inequality, what they say wealth inequality *should* be, and what wealth inequality *actually* is. The second is "Social Stratification: The Geography of Car Deaths in the United States," which explains how economic inequality shapes health and well-being in a way most people have never realized.

These PowerPoints can be downloaded from my personal website, www.TheSociologyPage.com. Look at the bottom left of the main page for the doorway to "PowerPoint Presentations." You can also visit this text's Resources site at Pearson's online catalog, or find the PowerPoints at the Instructor's Resources folder in your Pearson REVEL account.

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TEACHING SUGGESTIONS, EXERCISES, AND PROJECTS

1. **The Price of Speeding**

Here's an interesting question to kick around in class. In the United States, traffic tickets can be expensive, but they are the same for everyone. So, if a person is driving 50 miles per hour in a 25 zone, the driver might get nabbed and face a fine of several hundred dollars, depending on the state and on any prior convictions.

If you are person with an average income, a fine of, say, $235 is probably sufficient to get your attention. It may act as a deterrent. But what if you have an income well up in the top 1 percent, an income of, say, $900,000 a year? For you, a $235 speeding fine is a small distraction and imposes no real hardship.

By 2014, this is the type of thinking that has led a number of European nations to link speeding fines to income. A few years ago, a 27-year-old man was ticketed for driving 50 MPH in a 25 zone in Finland. The court asked for income records, which, in his case, showed that he had earned more than $10 million the year before. The court then imposed a fine of some $200,000 for his offense. This fine amounts to roughly 2 percent of the driver's annual income. Lower-income people with the same ticket would pay a fine based on a smaller share of a smaller annual income.

Using the Finnish system of unequal fines, a driver with an annual income of $40,000 might receive a fine of about the same $235 in our original example. But a driver with a million dollar income would pay $20,000, or almost one hundred times as much. That way, the argument goes, everyone feels the same level of pain.

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2. Kathleen A. Tiemann and her coauthors have devised a novel and creative technique for sensitizing students to social class inequality. Tiemann comments that the major difficulty involved is that most students believe success and failure are because of individual efforts. She proposes a "car (automobile) exercise" as a vehicle for demonstrating how stereotypes are so important in reference to people's lives—in this case, how the kind of automobile a person owns can be misleading in reference to his or her overall socioeconomic status ("What Kind of Car Am I? An Exercise to Sensitize Students to Social Class Inequality," *Teaching Sociology* ,Vol. 34, October 2006: pp 398–403).

3. Students who have taken an introductory sociology course prior to enrolling in social problems may have the background necessary to appreciate the concept of social stratification and its implications for poverty. For those students who have not previously enrolled in introductory sociology, an analysis of social stratification and its inevitability in society can help set the stage for a better understanding of poverty. The major positions on this issue are, for the most part, referenced in the text's discussion, but you may wish to elaborate on them: Weber, Marx, Dahrendorf, Mills, Parsons, Davis and Moor, and Lenski. An excellent source in this regard is Melvin Tumin's classic work *Social Stratification: The Forms and Functions of Inequality* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1985).

4. Over the past several years, the publication *Teaching Sociology* has included a number of articles concerning novel strategies for teaching about stratification, social classes, and social mobility. Several articles that may assist you in this regard are William Brislen and Clayton D. Peoples's "Using a Hypothetical Distribution of Grades to Introduce Social Stratification," *Teaching Sociology,* Vol. 33, January 2005: pp. 74–80; Wynne Wright and Elizabeth Ransom's "Stratification on the Menu: Using Restaurant Menus to Examine Social

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Class," *Teaching Sociology,* Vol. 33, July 2005: pp. 310–316; Laura Nichols, Joshua Berry, and Demetra Kalogrides's "Hop on the Bus: Driving Stratification Concepts Home," *Teaching Sociology,* Vol. 32, April 2004: pp. 213–221; Debra Wetcher-Hendricks and Wade Luquet's "Teaching Stratification with Crayons," *Teaching Sociology,* Vol. 31, July 2003: pp. 345–351; Angela J. Hattery's "Sleeping in the Box, Thinking Outside the Box: Student Reflections on Innovative Pedagogical Tools for Teaching About and Promoting a Greater Understanding of Social Class Inequality Among Undergraduates," *Teaching Sociology,* Vol. 31, October 2003: pp. 412–427; Mark Abrahamson's "Stratification, Mobility, and a Playing Cards Metaphor," *Teaching Sociology,* Vol. 22, April 1994: pp. 183–188; and Gregg Lee Carter's "Teaching the Idea of Contextual Effects," *Teaching Sociology,* Vol. 19, October 1991: pp. 526–531.

5. The text discusses the social implications of structural inequality. Catherine L. Coghlan and Denise W. Huggins have devised an exercise using a modified version of the game Monopoly to stimulate student reflection and class discussion on social stratification in the United States. Coghlan and Huggins point out that this exercise is effective in social problems courses (" 'That's Not Fair!' A Simulation Exercise in Social Stratification and Structural Inequality," *Teaching Sociology,* Vol. 32, April 2004: pp. 177–187).

6. Students sometimes have difficulty evaluating how their "life chances" differ from the truly disadvantaged in our society. Margaret A. Miller has constructed a "Life Chances Exercise" (*Teaching Sociology,* Vol. 20, October 1992: pp. 316–320) that will be extremely helpful in sensitizing students to this concept.

7. David Shiman (*Economic & Social Justice: A Human Rights Perspective*) has developed an innovative method for exploring stratification that will work in a small-class setting. To engage your students in the Scramble for Wealth and Power, have all students form

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an even circle around a table with 100 pennies on it. At the sound of go, students are to gather as many pennies as they can without touching anyone else. (Students who touch others are disqualified.) Once all pennies are allocated, inform students that pennies represent wealth and power in society. The amount they possess will affect their capacity to satisfy their needs (e.g., basic education, adequate food and nutrition, good health care, adequate housing) and wants (e.g., higher education, cars, computers, toys, television, and other luxury items). Divide students into three groups: great wealth and power, some wealth and power, and little or no wealth and power. Allow students to give to others if they choose to, and if they donate, provide them with the honor of having their name listed on the board as a donor. Next, give each group the task of creating a plan for the fair distribution of the pennies (the world's wealth). Each group must (a) explain what needs to be done (if anything), (b) show why their plan is fair, and (c) describe what the group plans to do and why. Ask each group to appoint a spokesperson to explain their plan to the others. Afterward, announce that a vote will now be held on which plan to adopt. When participants are ready to vote, announce that participants with six or more pennies have five votes, those with three to five pennies have two votes, and those with two or fewer pennies have one-half vote. This strategy reinforces the fact that the distribution of power often reflects that of wealth. Have participants vote and tabulate the results. Announce which plan is to be implemented. Carry out this plan, redistributing the wealth if necessary. Discuss the exercise with students. Explain the role of one's social position in the social construction of (a) the social problem, (b) the proposed solutions, and (c) ideas of "fairness."

8. Amy Glassmeier and Pennsylvania State University created a Living Wage Calculator (http://livingwage.mit.edu/) that estimates the cost of living in each area in the United States. Have your students use the calculator to determine the typical expenses, the living wage,

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and typical wages for their hometown. Ask students to share their commentary on how realistic the minimum estimate of the cost of living for low-wage families is. Allow for an examination of the social forces that impact the social construction of "realistic."

9. Using the local minimum from the city in which your university/college is located, ask students to create a monthly family budget for a family of four. There are two working adults (both making minimum wage) and two children in the family. The budget should include housing (use the local want ads to determine housing costs), food, household supplies, electric, gas, water, telephone, childcare, medical care, transportation, entertainment, and miscellaneous. Students should share their experience on the exercise with the class, including what they were able to pay for, what they were forced to sacrifice, and their plans for adjusting to life without certain necessities/luxuries (e.g., what you will do when you are ill if you do not have health insurance or how you will get to work if you cannot make a car payment). Allow students to note how one's social position in real society shapes one's views within the simulated experience. Liberals support raising the minimum wage to $12 or $15 an hour so that a minimum wage workers can support a family. Conservatives claim that such an increase in the minimum wage would put many people out of work and that most minimum wage work involves "transition jobs" that get people into the labor force, giving them skills and workplace experience which with they will move on to higher-paying work. Ask students to assess their own atitudes about the minimum wage.

10. Arrange a student debate on the issue of taxation. Each student should be given a take-home assignment that involves preparing an argument on the benefits of a society that imposes one of the following: both regressive and progressive taxation, neither regressive nor progressive taxation, progressive taxation only, or regressive taxation only. After students return

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to class with their written arguments, divide them into four teams based on their points of view. Allow for the four teams to debate against one another. After the debate, use the remaining class time to discuss how the various teams came to construct their ideas about taxation and the political viewpoints that feed their arguments (conservative, liberal, radical).

11. This exercise will help to explain the importance of social class in people's lives. First, ask your students to locate themselves within the class hierarchy (based on such indicators as parents' occupation, family income, education level, lineage). Second, encourage them to think about how their position within the socioeconomic hierarchy has provided them with specific advantages (or disadvantages). Furthermore, ask them to vocalize the contrasts that they can observe between the positions of most college students and that of the poor, particularly in reference to the ability of poor people to improve their life chances.

12. Many students believe that lots of people on welfare are exploiting the system by "feeding from the public trough" with no intention of getting back on their feet again. One strategy that you can utilize to clarify this issue is to have your students confront the welfare bureaucracy head-on, so to speak. Have them find out whether they are eligible for public assistance, and if so, what kind, how much they would receive, and what they would have to go through to get it. What they will find out is that the public dole is not that easy to get on in the first place, and what is more, it does not provide enough assistance to make it very attractive. Have your students report their experiences to the class.

13. To emphasize the way that inequality offers advantages and disadvantages, divide the class into four groups and then give each group a different amount of time to finish a quiz, the least amount of time being too brief to do a good job. In addition to the overall lesson on the

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consequences of structured inequality, you may find some variations in students' reactions depending on whether they "benefit" from the inequality.

14. Ask your students to conduct an observational analysis of other people's behavior in a shopping mall. Instruct them to watch for nonverbal symbols that provide information about these individuals' social class positions. In addition to noting such characteristics as people's clothing, hairstyle, and jewelry, they can also note the type of store the people choose to shop in or the names of stores printed on the bags where they have made purchases. Students should be able to describe *what* they used as evidence of a person's social class and also explain *why* the characteristics they observed tell them something about the person's social class affiliation.

WEB LINKS

A Biblical View of Wealth and Poverty

http://www.leaderu.com/orgs/probe/docs/poverty.html

Bread for the World: U.S. Poverty Statistics

http://www.bread.org/hunger/us/?utm_source=adwords&utm_medium=onlinead&utm_campaign=search&utm_term=us-poverty&utm_content=text&gclid=CKi9veaF17ECFYPAKgodDzsA-g

Canadian Council on Social Development

Economic and Social Justice

http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/hreduseries/tb1b/Section2/index.htm

Explorations in Social Inequality

http://www.trinity.edu/mkearl/strat.html

The Geography of Poverty and Wealth

http://www.cid.harvard.edu/cidinthenews/articles/Sciam_0301_article.html

Ladies of Charity of the United States of America: The Feminization of Poverty

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http://aic.ladiesofcharity.us/advocacy/the-feminization-of-poverty/

People Like Us: Social Class in America (Educator's Resources)

http://www.pbs.org/peoplelikeus/

A Profile of the Working Poor

http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpswp2000.htm

2008 Hunger and Homelessness Survey Results

http://usmayors.org/pressreleases/uploads/RELEASEHUNGERHOMELESSNESS2008FINAL.pdf

The Vanishing Middle Class: Inside Out.

http://www.insideout.org/documentaries/middleclass/

Waging a Living: Educator's Resources

http://www.pbs.org/pov/wagingaliving/

World Poverty: The Wealth Gap Widens

http://www.socialistworld.net/eng/2006/12/20poverty.html

ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. Profile the U.S. poor according to age, race, gender, family patterns, and residence.
2. Compare and contrast the underclass with the rest of the poor in the United States.
3. Identify several social problems linked to poverty as identified in the text.
4. Discuss the controversial history of social welfare in the United States.
5. Apply both the structural-functional approach and the social-conflict approach to the topic of poverty.
6. Evaluate the benefits and consequences of progressive and regressive taxation. Explain who benefits and who suffers with each.

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7. Contrast how conservatives and liberals identify different causes of homelessness. Explain how political values are involved in constructing the problem and defining the solution.

8. Provide data that supports the claim that economic inequality in the United States has been increasing.

9. Explain how conservatives and liberals evaluate the effectiveness of the 1996 welfare reform. Explain how political values impact the measures of assessment.

10. How does the United States define "poverty?" How do European nations define poverty in a different way? Which approach do you support? Why?

FILM LIST

THE 51ST STATE: AMERICA'S WORKING POOR

(2007, 57 m, Insight Media)

This program explores the daily struggles facing the working poor in the United States. Students will gain an understanding of such issues as standard-of-living measurements, suburban poverty, welfare-to-work programs, and immigration issues.

THE AMERICAN RULING CLASS

(2007, 89 m, Bullfrog Films)

This is one of the most unusual films to be made in America in recent years—in terms of both form and content. The form is a "dramatic-documentary-musical," and the content is our country's most taboo topic: class, power, and privilege in our nominally democratic republic. The film explores the lives of two Yale students who seek their opportunities upon graduation. Barbara Ehrenreich, highlighted in this chapter, is featured in this film. Students will gain an understanding of how two privileged graduates come to decide whether they should seek to rule the world or to save it.

AMERICA'S WAR ON POVERTY

(1995, five installments, 60 m each, PBS Video)

This series provides a detailed history of the War on Poverty, beginning in the 1960s; each presentation includes an effective assessment of the lessons of the past, which we haven't always learned from. After showing this video, discuss the effects that the Welfare Reform Act of 1996 has had on poverty in America today.

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HOMELESS NOT HELPLESS: OPENING DOORS

(1992, 44 m, University of California Extension Center for Media and Independent Learning)

Narrated by Julian Bond, this eye-opening documentary on homelessness is unique in that it focuses on solutions: the program shows what is working and what is merely perpetuating poverty. This presentation explores a wide spectrum of programs, and the story is told by the people involved—in the streets, the missions, and the shelters.

NEW HARVEST, OLD SHAME

(1990, 60 m, PBS Video)

Thirty years after Edward R. Murrow's shocking presentation, *Harvest of Shame*, this PBS *Frontline* looks at the continued plight of migrant farm workers and examines the forces that have kept their lives so desperate.

NO PLACE LIKE HOME

(1994, 25 m, Berkeley Media LLC)

This video offers a detailed portrayal of what it is like for a family to live in poverty and how the cycle of poverty and violence is transmitted from generation to generation.

PEOPLE LIKE US: SOCIAL CLASS IN AMERICA

(2002, 124 m, Insight Media)

This program explores social and economic class issues in the United States. It discusses race and class, social mobility, class structure, the black bourgeoisie, social stratification, and lifestyle choices. Students will have an opportunity to explore various perspectives on social class and see how one's position in the social strata shapes access to luxuries and necessities as well as life choices.

ROGER AND ME

(1989, 89 m, rental video)

This is Michael Moore's first well-known documentary film. It provides a graphic account of the deindustrialization of Flint, Michigan, and situates Flint within the global assembly line. Flint's major industry, General Motors, ceased production and moved to Mexico. The film captures the social problems generated by General Motor's departure.

SOCIAL CLASS

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(2009, 36 m, Insight Media)

This program defines social class and considers its significance. It introduces basic concepts of social class, explains sociological perspectives, and examines such foundational perspectives on social class as functionalism and the ideas of Marx and Weber. The film also explores the effects of social class in the United States.

SOCIAL CLASS ISSUES IN THE USA

(1992, 60 m, RMI Productions, Inc.)

This film presents demographic data illustrating family income by ethnic group and illustrates how there is a steady increase of Americans below the poverty level. It focuses on the plight of the homeless.

SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

(2009, 30 m, Insight Media)

Looking at different types of social systems around the world and how they developed, this program relates social stratification to the means of existence, the culture, and micro-level interactions. This film illustrates how stratification has changed with industrialization and analyzes the conflict, functionalist, and interactionist views of stratification. The views of Karl Marx and Max Weber on class conflict are presented.

TEMPORARY DWELLINGS

(1992, 28 m, Filmakers Library)

This is a heartening look at a group of Seattle's homeless community who took matters into their own hands and erected a series of large, tattered gray tents. Tent City was run by the homeless with firm ground rules: no drugs or alcohol, no weapons, no violence. All major decisions were put to a vote in this bold experiment in self-government. Tent City lasted until it achieved its goal. The mayor provided a shelter to be run by the residents themselves. The film shows that when the homeless have a sense of community and dignity, they can help themselves.

WAGE SLAVES: NOT GETTING BY IN AMERICA

(2002, 100 m, A&E Home Video)

The program chronicles the struggle of America's "working poor" to make ends meet in an increasingly (and often prohibitively) expensive society. In preparing her best-selling book, *Nickel and Dimed in America*, author Barbara Ehrenreich (highlighted in <LINK>Chapter 2</LINK> of the text) embarked on a grim odyssey through three cities and half a dozen minimum wage jobs. What emerges is a rare look at how prosperity appears from the bottom

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looking up, and a critical examination of the policies that shape the harsh realities of life among the working poor. Emphasis is placed upon five workers, most of them single parents, trying to survive on salaries ranging from $6 to $7 hourly. Students will gain insight on the ongoing debate about increasing the national minimum wage and improving the working conditions of those in the lowest financial brackets.

WAGING A LIVING

(2006, 76 m, PBS Educational Media)

Shot over a three-year period in the northeast and California, this observational documentary captures the dreams, frustrations, and accomplishments of a diverse group of people who struggle to live from paycheck to paycheck. By presenting an unvarnished look at the barriers that these workers must overcome to escape poverty, students will get a glimpse of the social construction of the American dreams among four working-poor families.

Chapter 2 Test Bank, Economic Inequality

In this revision of the test bank, I have updated all of the questions to reflect changes in *Social Problems, 7th edition.* For each chapter of the text, this test bank provides fifty multiple-choice questions and five essay questions. The multiple-choice questions are coded for level of difficulty (easy, moderate, or difficult). The multiple-choice questions are also coded for the level of reasoning involved. The four levels of reasoning are: Factual (recall of factual material), Understand (understanding key concepts), Apply (application of sociological knowledge to a situation), and Analyze (identifying the interrelationship among variables).

Types of Questions

		Mult Choice		Essay	Total Qs
Factual material		17 (34%)		0	17
Understanding concepts		11 (22%)		0	11
Apply what you know		17 (34%)		2 (40%)	19
Analyze the issue		5 (10%)		3 (60%)	8
		50		5	55

Multiple-Choice Questions

TB_Q2.1.1
Source ID: n/a

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The richest 20 percent of U.S. families earn
a. almost as much as the remaining 80 percent of families combined.
b. about as much as the poorest 40 percent of families combined.
c. a share of income about equal to that of other quintiles.
d. only slightly more than the national average.
(Answer: a)

Consider This: Between 1980 and 2014, the annual income of the highest-paid 20 percent of U.S. families increased by 63 percent. During this period, people in the middle of the income distribution typically saw gains of about 18 percent. The lowest-paid 20 percent of U.S. families, however, actually lost ground (-5 percent), making an average of $888 less in 2014 than they earned in 1980. L.O.2.1 Describe the distribution of income and wealth in the United States.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.1 Describe the distribution of income and wealth in the United States.
Topic/Concept: Economic Inequality in the United States
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Remember the Facts
Page: 35

TB_Q2.1.2
Source ID: n/a

Families in the top 10 percent of income earn at least
a. $96,000 a year.
b. $196,000 a year.
c. $296,000 a year.
d. $500,000 a year.
(Answer: b)

Consider This: According to the U.S. government, in 2014, the median family income—that is, the middle case of all families when ranked by income—was $66,632. The highest-earning 20 percent of U.S. families (with income of at least $129,000 a year and with a mean or average of $217,021) received 48.9 percent of all income. L.O.2.1 Describe the distribution of income and wealth in the United States.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.1 Describe the distribution of income and wealth in the United States.
Topic/Concept: Economic Inequality in the United States
Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Remember the Facts
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TB_Q2.1.3
Source ID: n/a

Social stratification is defined as
a. the fact that some people tend to outperform others.
b. the way people in a society size up their social standing.

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c. a society's system of ranking categories of people in a hierarchy.
d. the difference in income between rich and poor members of a society.

(Answer: c)

Consider This: Stratification produces social classes, categories of people who have similar access to resources and opportunities. L.O.2.1 Describe the distribution of income and wealth in the United States.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.1 Describe the distribution of income and wealth in the United States.
Topic/Concept: Economic Inequality in the United States
Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Understand the Concepts
Page: 35

TB_Q2.1.4
Source ID: n/a

The richest 20 percent of the U.S. population controls what percentage of all privately-owned wealth?
a. 89 percent
b. 59 percent
c. 39 percent
d. 20 percent

(Answer: a)

Consider This: Wealth is made up of more than money earned; it also includes the value of homes, automobiles, stocks, bonds, real estate, and businesses. L.O.2.1 Describe the distribution of income and wealth in the United States.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.1 Describe the distribution of income and wealth in the United States.
Topic/Concept: Economic Inequality in the United States
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Remember the Facts
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TB_Q2.1.5
Source ID: n/a

Marco earns $45,000 a year as a government employee and receives interest from several certificates of deposit (CDs). The money that comes from these sources each year represents his
a. wealth.
b. income.
c. socioeconomic status.
d. prestige.

(Answer: b)

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Consider This: Any discussion of economic inequality must begin with a look at inequality in income, salary or wages from a job plus earnings from investments and other sources. L.O.2.1 Describe the distribution of income and wealth in the United States.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.1 Describe the distribution of income and wealth in the United States.
Topic/Concept: Economic Inequality in the United States
Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Apply What You Know
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TB_Q2.1.6
Source ID: n/a

According to the U.S. government, the 2014 *median* family income was
a. $401,632.
b. $50,632.
c. $66,632.
d. $70,632.
(Answer: c)

Consider This: Median family income refers to the middle case of all families when ranked by income. L.O.2.1 Describe the distribution of income and wealth in the United States.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.1 Describe the distribution of income and wealth in the United States.
Topic/Concept: Economic Inequality in the United States
Difficulty Level: Difficult
Skill Level: Remember the Facts
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TB_Q2.1.7
Source ID: n/a

The lowest paid 20 percent of U.S. families receive about what percentage of all income in the country?
a. 3.6 percent
b. 13.6 percent
c. 23.6 percent
d. 33.6 percent
(Answer: a)

Consider This: The lowest-paid 20 percent has income below $29,000 a year and averages about $16,000. High-income families earn thirteen times as much as the low-income families. L.O.2.1 Describe the distribution of income and wealth in the United States.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.1 Describe the distribution of income and wealth in the United States.
Topic/Concept: Economic Inequality in the United States
Difficulty Level: Difficult
Skill Level: Remember the Facts
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TB_Q2.1.8
Source ID: n/a

Since about 1980, income inequality among U.S. families has
a. been declining.
b. been increasing.
c. been holding steady.
d. been fluctuating up and down with no long-term change.
(Answer: b)

Consider This: Economic gains have been huge for the rich and small for most others. L.O.2.1 Describe the distribution of income and wealth in the United States.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.1 Describe the distribution of income and wealth in the United States.
Topic/Concept: Economic Inequality in the United States
Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Remember the Facts
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TB_Q2.1.9
Source ID: n/a

If you wanted to add up the total economic assets owned by a person or family, you would be measuring
a. income.
b. social status.
c. wealth.
d. status base.
(Answer: c)

Consider This: In the U.S., economic inequality is even greater when it comes to wealth (versus income), the value of all the economic assets owned by a person or family, minus any debts. Wealth is made up of more than money earned; it also includes the value of homes, automobiles, stocks, bonds, real estate, and businesses. L.O.2.1 Describe the distribution of income and wealth in the United States.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.1 Describe the distribution of income and wealth in the United States.
Topic/Concept: Economic Inequality in the United States
Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Understand the Concepts
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TB_Q2.1.10
Source ID: n/a

In 2013, the average compensation of the 100 highest-paid chief executive officers (CEOs) in the United States

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a. was less than $500,000.
b. was almost $1 million.
c. was just over $10 million
d. exceeded $30 million.

(Answer: d)

Consider This: This amount is more than the annual income of all 438 people who work in the White House, including the president. L.O.2.1 Describe the distribution of income and wealth in the United States.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.1 Describe the distribution of income and wealth in the United States.
Topic/Concept: Economic Inequality in the United States
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Remember the Facts
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TB_Q2.1.11
Source ID: n/a

To provide an example of a tax that is regressive rather than progressive, you would point to

a. the inheritance tax.
b. the federal income tax.
c. the tax on gasoline.
d. no tax, because there are no regressive taxes in the United States.

(Answer: c)

Consider This: A regressive tax takes a bigger bite out of lower-income budgets. L.O.2.1 Describe the distribution of income and wealth in the United States.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.1 Describe the distribution of income and wealth in the United States.
Topic/Concept: Economic Inequality in the United States
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Apply What You Know
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TB_Q2.2.12
Source ID: n/a
Which concept is used by the U.S. government for the purpose of counting the poor?

a. poverty line
b. poverty gap
c. median income
d. nonfarm family income

(Answer: a)

Consider This: It represents a dollar amount of annual income below which a person or family is defined as “poor” and may therefore become eligible for government assistance. L.O.2.2 Assess the differences in the lives of the rich and the poor in the United States.

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Learning Objective: L.O.2.2 Assess the differences in the lives of the rich and the poor in the United States.
Topic/Concept: The Rich and the Poor: A Social Profile
Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Understand the Concepts
Page: 41

TB_Q2.2.13
Source ID: n/a

In 2014, about what percentage of the U.S. population lived in a household with income below the poverty line?
a. 2 percent
b. 5 percent
c. 8 percent
d. 15 percent
(Answer: d)

Consider This: In 2014, some 46.7 million people were counted among the poor. L.O.2.2 Assess the differences in the lives of the rich and the poor in the United States.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.2 Assess the differences in the lives of the rich and the poor in the United States.
Topic/Concept: The Rich and the Poor: A Social Profile
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Remember the Facts
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TB_Q2.2.14
Source ID: n/a

In 2014, the poverty line for a non-farm family of four was
a. $10,230.
b. $15,230.
c. $24,230.
d. $27,230.
(Answer: c)

Consider This: The U.S Department of Agriculture set the poverty line to represent an annual income three times what a family has to spend in order to eat a basic, nutritious diet. Every year, government officials adjust this dollar amount to reflect the changing cost of living. L.O.2.2 Assess the differences in the lives of the rich and the poor in the United States.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.2 Assess the differences in the lives of the rich and the poor in the United States.
Topic/Concept: The Rich and the Poor: A Social Profile
Difficulty Level: Difficult
Skill Level: Remember the Facts

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TB_Q2.2.15
Source ID: n/a

In 2014, how many people in America were counted as poor by the federal government?
a. 6.7 million
b. 16.7 million
c. 36.7 million
d. 46.7 million
(Answer: d)

Consider This: In 2014, the poverty rate in the United States was counted as about 15 percent of the U.S. population. L.O.2.2 Assess the differences in the lives of the rich and the poor in the United States.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.2 Assess the differences in the lives of the rich and the poor in the United States.
Topic/Concept: The Rich and the Poor: A Social Profile
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Remember the Facts
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TB_Q2.2.16
Source ID: n/a

Most people in the United States who live below the poverty line are
a. elderly.
b. homeless.
c. white.
d. male
(Answer: c)

Consider This: Most poor people are white; minorities are at higher risk of poverty. L.O.2.2 Assess the differences in the lives of the rich and the poor in the United States.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.2 Assess the differences in the lives of the rich and the poor in the United States.
Topic/Concept: The Rich and the Poor: A Social Profile
Difficulty Level: Difficult
Skill Level: Analyze It
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TB_Q2.2.17
Source ID: n/a

In 2014, what percentage of children under the age of eighteen lived in poor households?
a. 1 percent

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b. 21 percent
c. 41 percent
d. 61 percent
(Answer: b)

Consider This: The age category at greatest risk of poverty is children, who make up one-third of the U.S. poor. In 2014, 15.5 million young people under the age of 18 were living in poor households. Almost half of these children live in families with incomes no more than half the poverty line. L.O.2.2 Assess the differences in the lives of the rich and the poor in the United States.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.2 Assess the differences in the lives of the rich and the poor in the United States.
Topic/Concept: The Rich and the Poor: A Social Profile
Difficulty Level: Difficult
Skill Level: Remember the Facts
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TB_Q2.2.18
Source ID: n/a

Which term refers to the trend by which women represent an increasing share of the U.S. poor?
a. gender gap
b. glass ceiling
c. feminization of poverty
d. poverty gap
(Answer: c)

Consider This: In 1960, most poor families contained both men and women; today, 50 percent of poor families are headed by a woman with no husband present, and just 10 percent are headed by a single man. L.O.2.2 Assess the differences in the lives of the rich and the poor in the United States.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.2 Assess the differences in the lives of the rich and the poor in the United States.
Topic/Concept: The Rich and the Poor: A Social Profile
Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Understand the Concepts
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TB_Q2.2.19
Source ID: n/a

Jonas lives in a region of the United States with a very high poverty rate. He probably lives in
a. the Southwest, near the Mexican border
b. New England, along the Atlantic coast
c. the Midwest
d. the Pacific Northwest
(Answer: a)

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Consider This: Poverty is widespread across Appalachia, along the Texas border with Mexico, and in parts of the Great Plains and the Southwest (especially on American Indian lands).
L.O.2.2 Assess the differences in the lives of the rich and the poor in the United States.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.2 Assess the differences in the lives of the rich and the poor in the United States.
Topic/Concept: The Rich and the Poor: A Social Profile
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Apply What You Know
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TB_Q2.2.20
Source ID: n/a

Sylvia earns $7.25 per hour, the federal minimum wage in much of the country in 2016. She works full-time, year-round, and earns about $15,000 annually. This profile places her within which group?
a. working poor
b. non-working poor
c. the underclass
d. the poverty gap
(Answer: a)

Consider This: In 2014, 16 percent of the heads of poor families worked full time, at least fifty weeks during the year, yet remained below the poverty line because low-wage work rarely pays much more than the federal minimum hourly wage of $7.25 per hour, which was set in 2009.
L.O.2.2 Assess the differences in the lives of the rich and the poor in the United States.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.2 Assess the differences in the lives of the rich and the poor in the United States.
Topic/Concept: The Rich and the Poor: A Social Profile
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Apply What You Know
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TB_Q2.2.21
Source ID: n/a

The Williams family lives in an inner-city community that is poor, cut off from the larger society, and without good schools or good-paying jobs. This family is experiencing what sociologists call
a. hypersegregation.
b. redlining.
c. homelessness.
d. prejudice.
(Answer: a)

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Consider This: Poverty is most severe among the underclass, poor people who live in areas with high concentrations of poverty and limited opportunities for schooling or work. Under such conditions, children grow up poor, and most remain poor as adults. L.O.2.2 Assess the differences in the lives of the rich and the poor in the United States.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.2 Assess the differences in the lives of the rich and the poor in the United States.
Topic/Concept: The Rich and the Poor: A Social Profile
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Apply What You Know
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TB_Q2.3.22
Source ID: n/a

The term *infant mortality* refers to the risk of death
a. prior to birth, including abortions and miscarriages.
b. for a mother during childbirth.
c. during the first year of life.
d. before reaching the teenage years.
(Answer: c)

Consider This: Among the very poor in the United States, the death rate among newborns rises to levels we commonly find in low-income countries such as Nigeria and Vietnam. L.O.2.3 Analyze how poverty is linked to other social problems.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.3 Analyze how poverty is linked to other social problems.
Topic/Concept: Problems Linked to Poverty
Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Understand the Concepts
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TB_Q2.3.23
Source ID: n/a

Experts estimate that about how many people in the United States are homeless at some point during a year?
a. about 16,000
b. about 160,000
c. about 1.6 million
d. about 16 million
(Answer: c)

Consider This: Researchers estimate that 565,000 people are homeless in the United States on any given night, and as many as 1.6 million people are homeless at some point during a year. L.O.2.3 Analyze how poverty is linked to other social problems.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.3 Analyze how poverty is linked to other social problems.
Topic/Concept: Problems Linked to Poverty

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Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Remember the Facts
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TB_Q2.3.24
Source ID: n/a

In explaining the problem of homelessness, conservatives point to
a. the recent increase in low-wage jobs.
b. the low minimum wage.
c. personal problems, such as alcohol abuse and mental illness, among the homeless.
d. our nation's high rate of poverty.
(Answer: c)

Consider This: There are many causes of homelessness, and how much emphasis is given to any particular cause depends on one's political outlook. Liberals point to increasing economic inequality, a rise in low-wage jobs, and a lack of affordable housing as major causes. L.O.2.3 Analyze how poverty is linked to other social problems.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.3 Analyze how poverty is linked to other social problems.
Topic/Concept: Problems Linked to Poverty
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Apply What You Know
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TB_Q2.3.25
Source ID: n/a

In approaching the problem of homelessness, liberals point to
a. personal problems, such as alcohol abuse and mental illness, among the homeless.
b. economic issues such as low-wage jobs and high rates of unemployment.
c. moral weakness among poor people.
d. the need for greater self-discipline and personal responsibility.
(Answer: b)

Consider This: There are many causes of homelessness, and how much emphasis is given to any particular cause depends on one's political outlook. Conservatives point to personal problems, noting that one-third of homeless people suffer from a mental disorder or abuse alcohol or some other drug. L.O.2.3 Analyze how poverty is linked to other social problems.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.3 Analyze how poverty is linked to other social problems.
Topic/Concept: Problems Linked to Poverty
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Apply What You Know
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TB_Q2.3.26
Source ID: n/a

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The educational policy of placing some children in college-bound ("academic") paths and others in job-oriented ("vocational") paths is called
a. tracking.
b. mainlining.
c. mainstreaming.
d. redlining.
(Answer: a)

Consider This: Schools divide children into college-bound ("academic") and job-oriented ("vocational") coursework tracks. The stated goal is to teach according to each child's academic ability. But research suggests that school officials often see privileged children as more talented and label children as less able just because they are poor. L.O.2.3 Analyze how poverty is linked to other social problems.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.3 Analyze how poverty is linked to other social problems.
Topic/Concept: Problems Linked to Poverty
Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Understand the Concepts
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TB_Q2.3.27
Source ID: n/a

In the 2012 presidential election, 80 percent of people earning $100,000 or more voted. Among those earning less than $40,000, what percentage of people voted?
a. 99 percent
b. 84 percent
c. 69 percent
d. 54 percent
(Answer: d)

Consider This: The increasing number of voters who supported "outsider" candidates (Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump) in the 2016 presidential campaign suggests that apathy goes down when voters sense that leaders might bring about real change. L.O.2.3 Analyze how poverty is linked to other social problems.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.3 Analyze how poverty is linked to other social problems.
Topic/Concept: Problems Linked to Poverty
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Remember the Facts
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TB_Q2.4.28
Source ID: n/a

In the United States, social welfare programs that provide government assistance of one type or another benefit

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a. only a small share of the poor.
b. only poor people.
c. only disabled people.
d. most people.

(Answer: d)

Consider This: Social welfare takes many forms, including government benefits for workers who lose their jobs, Red Cross benefits for flood victims, or simply people lending a hand to their neighbors after a tornado destroys many homes. L.O.2.4 Explain the changing ways our society has used the social welfare system to respond to poverty.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.4 Explain the changing ways our society has used the social welfare system to respond to poverty.
Topic/Concept: Responding to Poverty: The Welfare System
Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Remember the Facts
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TB_Q2.4.29
Source ID: n/a

In 1932, President Franklin D. Roosevelt described "one-third of a nation ill-clothed, ill-housed, and ill-fed," proposing the New Deal, which included a major new program called

a. Head Start.
b. Medicare.
c. Social Security.
d. a labor union.

(Answer: c)

Consider This: Roosevelt's economic programs that came to be known as the New Deal addressed the problem of poverty by providing a social "safety net" for the U.S. population. L.O.2.4 Explain the changing ways our society has used the social welfare system to respond to poverty.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.4 Explain the changing ways our society has used the social welfare system to respond to poverty.
Topic/Concept: Responding to Poverty: The Welfare System
Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Remember the Facts
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TB_Q2.5.30
Source ID: n/a

In 1960, just before President Lyndon Johnson launched a War on Poverty, the national poverty rate stood at about

a. 2 percent.
b. 12 percent.

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c. 22 percent.
d. 32 percent.
(Answer: c)

Consider This: The official poverty rate fell to about 11 percent by the early 1970s. L.O.2.5 Apply sociological theory to the issue of poverty.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.5 Apply sociological theory to the issue of poverty.
Topic/Concept: Theories of Poverty
Difficulty Level: Difficult
Skill Level: Remember the Facts
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TB_Q2.5.31
Source ID: n/a

Anthropologist Oscar Lewis referred to cultural patterns that make poverty a way of life as
a. the bell curve thesis.
b. the culture of poverty.
c. meritocracy.
d. social disorganization.
(Answer: b)

Consider This: Lewis claimed that people adapt to poverty, accepting their plight and giving up hope that life can improve. Poverty thus is passed from one generation to the next. L.O.2.5 Apply sociological theory to the issue of poverty.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.5 Apply sociological theory to the issue of poverty.
Topic/Concept: Theories of Poverty
Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Understand the Concepts
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TB_Q2.4.32
Source ID: n/a

Overall, the result of the 1996 federal welfare reform has been
a. to increase in the number of people receiving welfare assistance.
b. to end of the policy of providing cash assistance to any poor people.
c. to bring about a steady decrease in the poverty rate.
d. to decrease the number of people receiving welfare but with little change to the number of poor people.
(Answer: d)

Consider This: Supporters of welfare reform (mainly conservatives) call the policy a success. They point to the fact that the nation's welfare rolls have fallen by half. In addition, half of those who have left welfare now have jobs, and most of the remainder are attending school or enrolled in training programs. But critics (mostly liberals) counter that most people who have left welfare

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for work now have low-wage jobs that leave them struggling to make ends meet. L.O.2.4 Explain the changing ways our society has used the social welfare system to respond to poverty.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.4 Explain the changing ways our society has used the social welfare system to respond to poverty.
Topic/Concept: Responding to Poverty: The Welfare System
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Apply What You Know
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TB_Q2.5.33
Source ID: n/a

During the 1920s and 1930s, sociologists at the University of Chicago linked poverty to a breakdown in social order due to rapid social change. The correct name for this view is
a. the bell curve thesis.
b. the culture of poverty thesis.
c. the social disorganization thesis.
d. the hypersegregation thesis.
(Answer: c)

Consider This: In the 1920s and 1930s, people arrived too fast for a city's neighborhoods, schools, and factories to absorb them. The result was overcrowded apartment buildings, overflowing classrooms, and too many people for the number of available jobs. The overall result was poverty and related social problems. L.O.2.5 Apply sociological theory to the issue of poverty.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.5 Apply sociological theory to the issue of poverty.
Topic/Concept: Theories of Poverty
Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Understand the Concepts
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TB_Q2.5.34
Source ID: n/a

In 1945, sociologists Kingsley Davis and Wilbert Moore made the claim that inequality has useful consequences for the operation of society. This claim is consistent with which type of theoretical analysis?
a. symbolic-interaction analysis
b. social-disorganization analysis
c. social-conflict analysis
d. structural-functional analysis
(Answer: d)

Consider This: Davis and Moore explained that some jobs are not very important and can be performed by just about anyone, while other positions require rare talents and extensive training.

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Linking rewards to the importance of various jobs is therefore a strategy to draw people and talent toward more important work. L.O.2.5 Apply sociological theory to the issue of poverty.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.5 Apply sociological theory to the issue of poverty.
Topic/Concept: Theories of Poverty
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Apply What You Know
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TB_Q2.5.35
Source ID: n/a

Sociologist Herbert Gans claimed that inequality benefits
a. everyone by making society more productive.
b. rich people by ensuring there is a supply of poor people willing to do almost any job, no matter how unpleasant.
c. bureaucrats by expanding government assistance programs.
d. corporations because poor people are a profitable market.
(Answer: b)

Consider This: Gans offers a critical response to Davis and Moore's theory, pointing out that inequality is useful but only to affluent people. L.O.2.5 Apply sociological theory to the issue of poverty.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.5 Apply sociological theory to the issue of poverty.
Topic/Concept: Theories of Poverty
Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Understand the Concepts
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TB_Q2.5.36
Source ID: n/a

William Ryan's "blaming the victim" thesis states that many people believe the cause of poverty is found in
a. the capitalist economy.
b. our tax system.
c. the poor themselves.
d. a high rate of immigration.
(Answer: c)

Consider This: Ryan suggests that instead of shaking our heads at the rundown houses where poor people live, we should ask why U.S. society allows so many people to live in such inadequate housing. Or, instead of pointing out how little schooling poor people have, we might ask why our society has an educational system that fails to provide adequate schooling to so many students. L.O.2.5 Apply sociological theory to the issue of poverty.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.5 Apply sociological theory to the issue of poverty.
Topic/Concept: Theories of Poverty

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Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Analyze It
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TB_Q2.5.37
Source ID: n/a

If you wanted to study poverty in terms of race and ethnicity, you would probably use
a. multicultural theory.
b. social disorganization theory.
c. Marxist theory.
d. cultural capital theory.
(Answer: a)

Consider This: Multicultural theory (or race-conflict theory) is one type of social-conflict approach. L.O.2.5 Apply sociological theory to the issue of poverty.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.5 Apply sociological theory to the issue of poverty.
Topic/Concept: Theories of Poverty
Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Apply What You Know
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TB_Q2.5.38
Source ID: n/a

The study of how race, class, and gender often result in multiple dimensions of disadvantage is called
a. subculture of poverty theory.
b. cultural capital theory.
c. social disorganization theory.
d. intersection theory.
(Answer: d)

Consider This: If women are disadvantaged and African Americans and Hispanics are also disadvantaged, are African American or Hispanic women doubly disadvantaged? How does the interplay of race, class, and gender result in multiple dimensions of disadvantage? L.O.2.5 Apply sociological theory to the issue of poverty.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.5 Apply sociological theory to the issue of poverty.
Topic/Concept: Theories of Poverty
Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Understand the Concepts
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TB_Q2.5.39
Source ID: n/a

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Poverty involves not only a lack of money; it also can mean a lack of skills, values, attitudes, and schooling, which together are called
a. meritocracy.
b. cultural capital.
c. the subculture of affluence.
d. intersection theory.
(Answer: b)

Consider This: Bourdieu and Passeron argue that young people born into affluent families benefit from a rich cultural environment. The advantages that they gain, both at home and at school, all but ensure their success. On the other hand, those born to low-income families have few such advantages. L.O.2.5 Apply sociological theory to the issue of poverty.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.5 Apply sociological theory to the issue of poverty.
Topic/Concept: Theories of Poverty
Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Understand the Concepts
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TB_Q2.5.40
Source ID: n/a

In 1960, one in four poor families was headed by a woman. By 2010, this share had changed to
a. less than one in six.
b. half.
c. three-in-four.
d. nine-in-ten.
(Answer: b)

Consider This: While just 10 percent of all poor families are headed by a single man, 39 percent are headed by a married couple, and 50 percent are headed by a single woman. L.O.2.5 Apply sociological theory to the issue of poverty.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.5 Apply sociological theory to the issue of poverty.
Topic/Concept: Theories of Poverty
Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Remember the Facts
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TB_Q2.5.41
Source ID: n/a

Karl Marx argued that in a capitalist society, a system that produced so much ended up making the majority so poor. He called this
a. blaming the victim.
b. an internal contradiction.
c. meritocracy.
d. social disorganization.

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(Answer: b)

Consider This: Marx believed that while the owners of the means of production became ever more rich and powerful; the workers in the capitalist economy, with only their labor to sell, faced a life of low wages and powerlessness. L.O.2.5 Apply sociological theory to the issue of poverty.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.5 Apply sociological theory to the issue of poverty.
Topic/Concept: Theories of Poverty
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Apply What You Know
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TB_Q2.6.42
If you were to support a conservative solution to the problem of poverty in the United States, you would focus on
a. government activism.
b. societal responsibility.
c. personal responsibility.
d. replacing the market economy.
(Answer: c)

Consider This: Conservatives hold the traditional value of self-reliance and support the idea that people should take responsibility for their personal well-being. They believe that U.S. society still offers opportunity and rewards both individual talent and personal effort. L.O.2.6 Analyze economic inequality from various positions on the political spectrum.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.6 Analyze economic inequality from various positions on the political spectrum.
Topic/Concept: Constructing Problems and Defining Solutions
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Analyze It
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TB_Q2.6.43
Source ID: n/a

Former U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell speaks as a conservative when he argues that the most effective way to prevent social problems like poverty is to
a. increase welfare benefits.
b. teach children personal responsibility and hard work.
c. eliminate welfare entirely.
d. transform this country's market economy.
(Answer: b)

Consider This: Powell credits discipline and determination—learned from his parents—as the key to his success, helping him to rise to a top position in the U.S. military and become one of this country's political leaders. L.O.2.6 Analyze economic inequality from various positions on the political spectrum.

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Learning Objective: L.O.2.6 Analyze economic inequality from various positions on the political spectrum.
Topic/Concept: Constructing Problems and Defining Solutions
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Apply What You Know
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TB_Q2.6.44
Source ID: n/a

If you take a liberal point of view, poverty is mostly a problem that
a. involves society as a whole.
b. focuses on traits of poor people.
c. can never be solved.
d. people should solve for themselves.
(Answer: a)

Consider This: Liberals think that helping the poor is a responsibility of society as a whole through the government. They claim that most people become poor not because they are lazy or because they make bad choices but because of the way society operates. L.O.2.6 Analyze economic inequality from various positions on the political spectrum.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.6 Analyze economic inequality from various positions on the political spectrum.
Topic/Concept: Constructing Problems and Defining Solutions
Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Analyze It
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TB_Q2.6.45
Source ID: n/a

A person who claims that government welfare assistance creates dependency is probably
a. a liberal.
b. a radical on the left.
c. a conservative.
d. unconcerned with politics.
(Answer: c)

Consider This: Conservatives claim expanding government welfare programs can make poverty worse by fostering dependency. L.O.2.6 Analyze economic inequality from various positions on the political spectrum.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.6 Analyze economic inequality from various positions on the political spectrum.
Topic/Concept: Constructing Problems and Defining Solutions
Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Apply What You Know

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TB_Q2.6.46
Source ID: n/a

As of 2013, the typical "welfare family" received about how much assistance each month?
a. $375
b. $775
c. $1,000
d. $1,200
(Answer: a)

Consider This: Public assistance benefits are small and provide people little help in improving their lives. L.O.2.6 Analyze economic inequality from various positions on the political spectrum.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.6 Analyze economic inequality from various positions on the political spectrum.
Topic/Concept: Constructing Problems and Defining Solutions
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Remember the Facts
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TB_Q2.6.47
Source ID: n/a

If you take a radical-left point of view, you see the main cause of poverty as
a. personal deficiencies in poor people themselves.
b. the normal operation of a capitalist economy.
c. misguided government assistance programs.
d. modern, industrial technology.
(Answer: b)

Consider This: Left-radicals believe that vast differences between rich and poor result from the normal operation of a capitalist economic system. L.O.2.6 Analyze economic inequality from various positions on the political spectrum.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.6 Analyze economic inequality from various positions on the political spectrum.
Topic/Concept: Constructing Problems and Defining Solutions
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Analyze It
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TB_Q2.6.48
Source ID: n/a

Radicals on the left agree with liberals that poverty is

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a. a matter of personal responsibility.
b. built into the very nature of capitalism.
c. a societal issue.
d. mostly a thing of the past.

(Answer: c)

Consider This: Radicals on the left agree with liberals that poverty is a societal issue and that we cannot expect poor people to improve their situation on their own. But they differ by claiming that the problem of poverty is built into a capitalist society. L.O.2.6 Analyze economic inequality from various positions on the political spectrum.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.6 Analyze economic inequality from various positions on the political spectrum.
Topic/Concept: Constructing Problems and Defining Solutions
Difficulty Level: Difficult
Skill Level: Apply What You Know
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TB_Q2.6.49
Source ID: n/a

A radical left solution to the problem of poverty would be

a. raising the minimum wage.
b. creating equal opportunity for people to achieve according to their talents.
c. expanding government assistance programs.
d. replacing our nation's capitalist economic system.

(Answer: d)

Consider This: Radicals on the left reach the conclusion that nothing less than a basic reformulation of the U.S. economy will result in a solution to the problems of economic inequality and poverty. L.O.2.6 Analyze economic inequality from various positions on the political spectrum.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.6 Analyze economic inequality from various positions on the political spectrum.
Topic/Concept: Constructing Problems and Defining Solutions
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Apply What You Know
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TB_Q2.6.50
Source ID: n/a

According to which of the following political positions does the solution to poverty lie in government reforms, such as increasing the minimum wage and raising tax rates on the wealthy?

a. radical left
b. liberal

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c. conservative
d. radical right

(Answer: b)
Consider This: Which group believes in the power of the existing political system to make changes that will benefit those with the greatest need rather than just those with wealth and power? L.O.2.6 Analyze economic inequality from various positions on the political spectrum.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.6 Analyze economic inequality from various positions on the political spectrum.
Topic/Concept: Constructing Problems and Defining Solutions
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Apply What You Know
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Essay Questions

TB_Q2.2.51
Source ID: n/a

How are age, race, ethnicity, and gender related to the risk of being poor? Provide data in support of your assertions.

- The age category at greatest risk of poverty is children, who make up 35 percent of the U.S. poor. In 2014, 15.5 million (21 percent) of people under eighteen were living in poor households.
- African Americans, Hispanics, and Asian Americans are at higher risk of being poor than whites. While more white people than black people and Hispanic people are poor, the percentage of minority people who are poor is higher than that of whites. In 2014, 26. 2 percent of African Americans (10.8 million people), 23.6 percent of Hispanics (13.1 million people), and 12.0 percent of Asian Americans (2.1 million people) were poor, compared to 10.1 percent of non-Hispanic whites (19.7 million people).
- Fifty-six percent of all U.S. adults who are poor are women, and 44 percent are men. The "feminization of poverty" refers to the trend of women making up an increasing percentage of the poor.

Consider This: The categories of people at greatest risk of being poor differ in social status and opportunity from those most likely to be rich. L.O.2.1 Describe the distribution of income and wealth in the United States.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.1 Describe the distribution of income and wealth in the United States.
Topic/Concept: Economic Inequality in the United States
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Analyze It
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TB_Q2.4.52
Source ID: n/a

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Sketch a brief history of welfare in the United States, including the colonial era, the early industrial era, and the twentieth century. What changed with the 1996 welfare reforms? What do you make of our nation's response to poverty?

- The early American colonists looked down on the poor as morally weak and undeserving; "welfare" was limited to acts of personal kindness between kin and neighbors.
- Industrial revolution encouraged individualism and self-reliance. The public criticized charity as a misguided policy that would end up reducing people's need to work and encourage them to become lazy. Organizations such as the Salvation Army offered food and shelter to the poor along with moral instruction.
- 1870s: scientific charity movement began studying what categories of people were poor, why people were poor, and what could be done to help them.
- 1930s: Great Depression; Roosevelt's New Deal include Works Progress Administration and Social Security.
- 1960s: Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty.
- 1980s-present: Reagan administration began a conservative backlash against welfare leading to the 1996 Welfare Reform Act.

Consider This: Social welfare programs are organized efforts by government, private organizations, or individuals to assist needy people considered worthy of assistance. L.O.2.4 Explain the changing ways our society has used the social welfare system to respond to poverty.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.4 Explain the changing ways our society has used the social welfare system to respond to poverty.
Topic/Concept: Responding to Poverty: The Welfare System
Difficulty Level: Difficult
Skill Level: Analyze It
Page: 50–52

TB_Q2.5.53
Source ID: n/a

Describe the basic insights about income inequality and poverty offered by the structural functional, social conflict, feminist, and symbolic interaction theories of poverty. What is one weakness of each theory?

- Structural-functional: some poverty is inevitable. Social pathology, social disorganization theories
- Symbolic-interaction: defining the problem; blaming the victim
- Social-conflict: poverty can be eliminated. Karl Marx, multicultural theory
- Feminist: feminist theory, intersection theory

Consider This: Theories of poverty apply sociological theory, as well as political beliefs and interpretations, to the issue of poverty. L.O.2.5 Apply sociological theory to the issue of poverty.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.5 Apply sociological theory to the issue of poverty.
Topic/Concept: Theories of Poverty
Difficulty Level: Difficult
Skill Level: Apply What You Know
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TB_Q2.5.54
Source ID: n/a

What is intersection theory? Provide data that support this analysis of economic inequality.

- Some categories of people face multiple disadvantages based on a combination of class, race, ethnicity, and gender.
- Non-white men earn less than white men; women earn less than men; so non-white women have a combined disadvantage.

Consider This: Intersection theory investigates the interplay of race, class, and gender often resulting in multiple dimensions of disadvantage. L.O.2.5 Apply sociological theory to the issue of poverty.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.5 Apply sociological theory to the issue of poverty.
Topic/Concept: Theories of Poverty
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Apply What You Know
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TB_Q2.6.55
Source ID: n/a

How do the conservative, liberal, and radical left approaches point to different causes of the problem of poverty? What solutions do these approaches support? What would you do to address poverty in the United States?

- Conservatives believe (a) social standing is a matter of personal responsibility; (b) people can escape poverty by taking advantage of the opportunities U.S. society offers; (c) government social welfare programs often make the poverty problem worse by fostering dependency.
- Liberals believe (a) poverty is a societal problem, stemming mostly from a lack of good jobs; (b) poverty is a societal responsibility; (c) government social programs should benefit the needy.
- Radical left believes (a) poverty is caused by normal operation of capitalist economy; (b) solving the poverty problem requires fundamental change to the economy so production meets social needs rather than increasing private profits.

Consider This: Issues of poverty and wealth are controversial. Some people consider income inequality as inevitable and link economic inequality to a free and productive society. Others are highly critical of income inequality and define poverty as a pressing national problem that can and must be reduced. L.O.2.6 Analyze economic inequality from various positions on the political spectrum.
Learning Objective: L.O.2.6 Analyze economic inequality from various positions on the political spectrum.
Topic/Concept: Constructing Problems and Defining Solutions
Difficulty Level: Difficult
Skill Level: Analyze It

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