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Chapter 01: How Sociologists View Social Problems: The Abortion Dilemma

Multiple Choice Questions

1. **The term *sociological imagination* was coined by sociologist _____.**
   A) Emile Durkheim
   B) Max Weber
   C) Karl Marx
   D) C. Wright Mills

Difficulty: Easy
QuestionID: 01-1-01
Topic: The Sociological Imagination
Skill: Remember the Facts
Objective: 1.1 Understand the sociological imagination [sociological perspective] and explain the difference between a personal and a social problem.

Answer: D) C. Wright Mills

2. **The sociological imagination is also called _____.**
   A) reinforcement theory
   B) common sense
   C) historical and biographical analysis
   D) the sociological perspective

Difficulty: Easy
QuestionID: 01-1-02
Topic: The Sociological Imagination
Skill: Remember the Facts
Objective: 1.1 Understand the sociological imagination [sociological perspective] and explain the difference between a personal and a social problem.

Answer: D) the sociological perspective

3. **When researchers focus on historical and current events such as war and peace, economic booms and busts, and depression and prosperity, they are examining a(n) _____.**
   A) broad social context
   B) narrow social context
   C) intimate social context
   D) close social context

Difficulty: Moderate
QuestionID: 01-1-03
Topic: The Sociological Imagination
Skill: Apply What You Know
Objective: 1.1 Understand the sociological imagination [sociological perspective] and explain the difference between a personal and a social problem.

Answer: A) broad social context

4. **Professor Fuentes encourages her students to look at people's actions and attitudes in the context of the social forces that shape them. As such, she wants her students to use _____.**
   A) the sociological imagination
   B) reinforcement theory
   C) common sense
   D) historical and biographical analysis

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Difficulty: Moderate
QuestionID: 01-1-04
Topic: The Sociological Imagination
Skill: Apply What You Know
Objective: 1.1 Understand the sociological imagination [sociological perspective] and explain the difference between a personal and a social problem.

Answer: A) the sociological imagination

5. **When Michael considers how his race, age, marital status, and education compare to that of other Americans, he is considering his _____.**
   A) personal troubles
   B) common sense
   C) social problems
   D) social location

Difficulty: Moderate
QuestionID: 01-1-05
Topic: Social Location
Skill: Apply What You Know
Objective: 1.2 Explain the significance of social location and explain why sociologists can use social location to predict group behavior but not individual behavior.

Answer: D) social location

6. **The ability to get one's way despite resistance is called _____.**
   A) values
   B) common sense
   C) power
   D) subjective concern

Difficulty: Easy
QuestionID: 01-1-06
Topic: What Is a Social Problem?
Skill: Remember the Facts
Objective: 1.3 Explain why a social problem consists of both objective conditions and subjective concerns and why social problems are relative.

Answer: C) power

7. **A belief about whether something is good or bad is a _____.**
   A) value
   B) document
   C) social problem
   D) personal trouble

Difficulty: Easy
QuestionID: 01-1-07
Topic: What Is a Social Problem?
Skill: Remember the Facts
Objective: 1.3 Explain why a social problem consists of both objective conditions and subjective concerns and why social problems are relative.

Answer: A) value

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8. **What are the aspects of society that can be measured or experienced?**
   A) Objective conditions
   B) Social problems
   C) Common sense ideas
   D) Subjective concerns

Difficulty: Moderate
QuestionID: 01-1-08
Topic: What Is a Social Problem?
Skill: Understand the Concepts
Objective: 1.3 Explain why a social problem consists of both objective conditions and subjective concerns and why social problems are relative.

Answer: A) Objective conditions

9. **Which of the following U.S. Supreme Court rulings made abortion legal in the United States?**
   A) *Webster v. Reproductive Services*
   B) *Roe v. Wade*
   C) *Casey v. Planned Parenthood*
   D) *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*

Difficulty: Easy
QuestionID: 01-1-09
Topic: What Is a Social Problem?
Skill: Understand the Concepts
Objective: 1.3 Explain why a social problem consists of both objective conditions and subjective concerns and why social problems are relative.

Answer: B) *Roe v. Wade*

10. **The teenagers who participate in a weekly Bible study class believe that abortion is bad. Their shared belief is an example of a(n) _____.**
   A) value
   B) social problem
   C) personal trouble
   D) experiment

Difficulty: Moderate
QuestionID: 01-1-10
Topic: What Is a Social Problem?
Skill: Understand the Concepts
Objective: 1.3 Explain why a social problem consists of both objective conditions and subjective concerns and why social problems are relative.

Answer: A) value

11. **A significant number of people worry about the conditions of public schools in urban areas. Such unease illustrates the _____ associated with a social problem.**
   A) subjective concerns
   B) objective conditions
   C) moral decay
   D) value neutrality

Difficulty: Moderate
QuestionID: 01-1-11
Topic: What Is a Social Problem?

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Skill: Apply What You Know
Objective: 1.3 Explain why a social problem consists of both objective conditions and subjective concerns and why social problems are relative.

Answer: A) subjective concerns

12. **Whether or not marijuana is legal, who obtains it and under what circumstances it is obtained are examples of the _____ associated with a social problem.**
A) objective conditions
B) subjective concerns
C) social solutions
D) moral dilemmas

Difficulty: Difficult
QuestionID: 01-1-12
Topic: What Is a Social Problem?
Skill: Analyze It
Objective: 1.3 Explain why a social problem consists of both objective conditions and subjective concerns and why social problems are relative.

Answer: A) objective conditions

13. **When Rhonda arrived at the abortion clinic, she was surprised to find dozens of protestors blocking her way. Rhonda pushed her way through the crowd and was able to see a physician at the clinic. Rhonda was able to get what she wanted, despite resistance. This is an example of Rhonda's _____.**
A) values
B) power
C) sociological imagination
D) subjective concern

Difficulty: Difficult
QuestionID: 01-1-13
Topic: What Is a Social Problem?
Skill: Analyze It
Objective: 1.3 Explain why a social problem consists of both objective conditions and subjective concerns and why social problems are relative.

Answer: B) power

14. **How many stages are there in the natural history of social problems?**
A) Two
B) Three
C) Four
D) Five

Difficulty: Easy
QuestionID: 01-1-14
Topic: The Natural History of Social Problems—Four Stages
Skill: Remember the Facts
Objective: 1.4 Identify the four stages through which social problems evolve.

Answer: C) Four

15. **Crafting an official response occurs during which stage in the natural history of social problems?**
A) First
B) Second

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C) Third
D) Fourth

Difficulty: Easy
QuestionID: 01-1-15
Topic: The Natural History of Social Problems—Four Stages
Skill: Remember the Facts
Objective: 1.4 Identify the four stages through which social problems evolve.

Answer: B) Second

16. **The emergence of leaders occurs during which stage in the natural history of social problems?**
A) First
B) Second
C) Third
D) Fourth

Difficulty: Easy
QuestionID: 01-1-16
Topic: The Natural History of Social Problems—Four Stages
Skill: Remember the Facts
Objective: 1.4 Identify the four stages through which social problems evolve.

Answer: A) First

17. **Antiabortionists who forward e-mails to their friends, run newspaper ads, write their representatives, post blogs, and operate Internet sites are classified as _____.**
A) radicals
B) feminists
C) conservatives
D) moderates

Difficulty: Easy
QuestionID: 01-1-17
Topic: The Natural History of Social Problems—Four Stages
Skill: Remember the Facts
Objective: 1.4 Identify the four stages through which social problems evolve.

Answer: D) moderates

18. **The earliest stage of a social problem entails _____.**
A) developing alternative strategies
B) defining the problem
C) crafting an official response
D) invigorating activists

Difficulty: Moderate
QuestionID: 01-1-18
Topic: The Natural History of Social Problems—Four Stages
Skill: Understand the Concepts
Objective: 1.4 Identify the four stages through which social problems evolve.

Answer: B) defining the problem

19. **One of the alternative strategies of the proabortionists has been to _____.**
A) eliminate the antiabortionists

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B) show that the fetus is a human being
C) stress how dangerous it used to be for women to have abortions
D) mandate abortions

Difficulty: Easy
QuestionID: 01-1-19
Topic: The Natural History of Social Problems—Four Stages
Skill: Remember the Facts
Objective: 1.4 Identify the four stages through which social problems evolve.

Answer: C) stress how dangerous it used to be for women to have abortions

20. **In *Webster v. Reproductive Services*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that _____.**
A) the states have no obligation to finance abortion
B) a woman under the age of 18 must have parental consent for an abortion
C) picketers and other demonstrators must remain 300 feet away from the entrances to abortion clinics
D) women should have the right to vote

Difficulty: Easy
QuestionID: 01-1-20
Topic: The Natural History of Social Problems—Four Stages
Skill: Remember the Facts
Objective: 1.4 Identify the four stages through which social problems evolve.

Answer: A) the states have no obligation to finance abortion

21. **If passed, the Freedom of Choice Law would _____.**
A) mean that individual states have no obligation to finance abortion
B) remove all state and federal restrictions on abortion
C) mandate that all picketers and other demonstrators remain 300 feet away from the entrances to abortion clinics
D) require all clinics to stay open at least 6 days per week

Difficulty: Easy
QuestionID: 01-1-21
Topic: The Natural History of Social Problems—Four Stages
Skill: Remember the Facts
Objective: 1.4 Identify the four stages through which social problems evolve.

Answer: B) remove all state and federal restrictions on abortion

22. **The development of alternative strategies occurs during which stage in the natural history of social problems?**
A) First
B) Second
C) Third
D) Fourth

Difficulty: Moderate
QuestionID: 01-1-22
Topic: The Natural History of Social Problems—Four Stages
Skill: Understand the Concepts
Objective: 1.4 Identify the four stages through which social problems evolve.

Answer: D) Fourth

23. **Rosita works as a counselor at a crisis pregnancy center. Her job is to _____.**
A) urge pregnant women to have abortions

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B) provide pregnant women with abortion services
C) encourage pregnant women to give birth
D) be a political activist for her cause

Difficulty: Moderate
QuestionID: 01-1-23
Topic: The Natural History of Social Problems—Four Stages
Skill: Apply What You Know
Objective: 1.4 Identify the four stages through which social problems evolve.

Answer: C) encourage pregnant women to give birth

24. **In an effort to express their opposition to abortion, members of a group burned and bombed abortion clinics around their state. These members can be classified as _____.**
A) moderates
B) radicals
C) alternatives
D) liberals

Difficulty: Moderate
QuestionID: 01-1-24
Topic: The Natural History of Social Problems—Four Stages
Skill: Apply What You Know
Objective: 1.4 Identify the four stages through which social problems evolve.

Answer: B) radicals

25. **In *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization,* the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that _____.**
A) because the U.S. Constitution says nothing about abortion, it cannot provide the basis for supporting abortion
B) the states have no obligation to finance abortion
C) states can require women under the age of 18 to obtain the consent of at least one parent to get an abortion
D) women must be given materials on fetal development, as well as a list of adoption agencies in her area

Difficulty: Easy
QuestionID: 01-1-25
Topic: The Natural History of Social Problems—Four Stages
Skill: Remember the Facts
Objective: 1.4 Identify the four stages through which social problems evolve.

Answer: A) because the U.S. Constitution says nothing about abortion, it cannot provide the basis for supporting abortion

26. **In the abortion debate, the _____ remain(s) the final arbiter.**
A) women
B) U.S. Supreme Court
C) president
D) physicians

Difficulty: Easy
QuestionID: 01-1-26
Topic: The Natural History of Social Problems—Four Stages
Skill: Understand the Concepts
Objective: 1.4 Identify the four stages through which social problems evolve.

Answer: B) U.S. Supreme Court

27. **When Senator Yano from Hawaii announced that he would support the repeal of the abortion law, this reflected which**

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stage of the natural development of social problems?

A) First
B) Second
C) Third
D) Fourth

Difficulty: Difficult
QuestionID: 01-1-27
Topic: The Natural History of Social Problems—Four Stages
Skill: Analyze It
Objective: 1.4 Identify the four stages through which social problems evolve.

Answer: B) Second

28. **When Joan Hayes, a former Washington lobbyist, argued that the abortion issue was about the right of pregnant women to choose whether or not to have a baby, this represented which stage of the natural development of social problems?**

A) First
B) Second
C) Third
D) Fourth

Difficulty: Difficult
QuestionID: 01-1-28
Topic: The Natural History of Social Problems—Four Stages
Skill: Analyze It
Objective: 1.4 Identify the four stages through which social problems evolve.

Answer: A) First

29. **When proabortion groups began to promote the development of abortion clinics around the country, this reflected which stage of the natural development of social problems?**

A) First
B) Second
C) Third
D) Fourth

Difficulty: Difficult
QuestionID: 01-1-29
Topic: The Natural History of Social Problems—Four Stages
Skill: Analyze It
Objective: 1.4 Identify the four stages through which social problems evolve.

Answer: C) Third

30. **The systematic and objective study of human groups is known as _____.**

A) sociology
B) the sociological imagination
C) research methods
D) case study

Difficulty: Easy
QuestionID: 01-1-30
Topic: The Role of Sociology in Social Problems
Skill: Remember the Facts
Objective: 1.5 Describe the contributions that sociologists can make in studying social problems.

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Answer: A) sociology

31. **A team of sociologists is gathering information on the number of abortions performed in clinics and hospitals. These researchers are _____.**
A) measuring objective conditions
B) evaluating likely consequences of social policies
C) applying the sociological imagination
D) identifying possible social policies

Difficulty: Moderate
QuestionID: 01-1-31
Topic: The Role of Sociology in Social Problems
Skill: Apply What You Know
Objective: 1.5 Describe the contributions that sociologists can make in studying social problems.

Answer: A) measuring objective conditions

32. **A team of sociologists is gathering information on student attitudes toward homelessness. These researchers are _____.**
A) measuring objective conditions
B) measuring subjective concerns
C) identifying possible social policies
D) applying the sociological imagination

Difficulty: Moderate
QuestionID: 01-1-32
Topic: The Role of Sociology in Social Problems
Skill: Apply What You Know
Objective: 1.5 Describe the contributions that sociologists can make in studying social problems.

Answer: B) measuring subjective concerns

33. **Which of the following statements pertaining to common sense is true?**
A) It is used to solve social problems.
B) It is not based on faulty assumptions.
C) It cannot be refined.
D) It is easy for commonsense ideas to be wrong.

Difficulty: Moderate
QuestionID: 01-1-33
Topic: Sociology and Common Sense
Skill: Analyze It
Objective: 1.6 Explain why common sense is not adequate to understand social problems.

Answer: D) It is easy for commonsense ideas to be wrong.

34. **_____ are rare in the study of social problems.**
A) Field studies
B) Experiments
C) Case studies
D) Surveys

Difficulty: Easy
QuestionID: 01-1-34
Topic: Doing Research on Social Problems
Skill: Remember the Facts

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Objective: 1.7 Understand the four basic research designs and research methods that sociologists use to study social problems.

Answer: B) Experiments

35. **The ways of doing research are known as _____.**
   A) documents
   B) methods
   C) values
   D) personal troubles

Difficulty: Easy
QuestionID: 01-1-35
Topic: Doing Research on Social Problems
Skill: Remember the Facts
Objective: 1.7 Understand the four basic research designs and research methods that sociologists use to study social problems.

Answer: B) methods

36. **Which method requires researchers to go into a setting that they want to learn more about?**
   A) Experiments
   B) Surveys
   C) Field studies
   D) Case studies

Difficulty: Moderate
QuestionID: 01-1-36
Topic: Doing Research on Social Problems
Skill: Understand the Concepts
Objective: 1.7 Understand the four basic research designs and research methods that sociologists use to study social problems.

Answer: C) Field studies

37. **Jamaal is interested in learning more about the victims of violent crime. To gather information, Jamaal asks people questions about their experiences with violent crime. Which technique is Jamaal using to gather information?**
   A) Interviews
   B) Experiments
   C) Analysis of documents
   D) Participant observation

Difficulty: Moderate
QuestionID: 01-1-37
Topic: Doing Research on Social Problems
Skill: Apply What You Know
Objective: 1.7 Understand the four basic research designs and research methods that sociologists use to study social problems.

Answer: A) Interviews

38. **Thomasina is conducting a study on sexual assault. She asks women who have been sexually assaulted to answer written questions. Which technique is Thomasina using to gather information?**
   A) Structured interview
   B) Analysis of documents
   C) Questionnaire
   D) Participant observation

Difficulty: Moderate
QuestionID: 01-1-38

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Topic: Doing Research on Social Problems
Skill: Apply What You Know
Objective: 1.7 Understand the four basic research designs and research methods that sociologists use to study social problems.

Answer: C) Questionnaire

39. **Phoebe is conducting a study on youth violence that occurs in suburban playgrounds. She watches and listens to what is taking place and records the actions and statements that the youth make. This is an example of _____.**
A) participant observation
B) an interview
C) a questionnaire
D) an analysis of documents

Difficulty: Moderate
QuestionID: 01-1-39
Topic: Doing Research on Social Problems
Skill: Apply What You Know
Objective: 1.7 Understand the four basic research designs and research methods that sociologists use to study social problems.

Answer: A) participant observation

40. **Lou is a researcher who wants to understand the physical abuse of prisoners at a local jail. Lou gets a job at the jail as a security guard. He secretly records his observations without revealing that he is a researcher. His observations are _____.**
A) overt
B) covert
C) structured
D) unstructured

Difficulty: Moderate
QuestionID: 01-1-40
Topic: Doing Research on Social Problems
Skill: Apply What You Know
Objective: 1.7 Understand the four basic research designs and research methods that sociologists use to study social problems.

Answer: B) covert

41. **Mayda wants to learn more about battered women who live in shelters with their children. After Mayda obtained permission to conduct her research at the local shelter, she began to make observations. This is an example of a(n) _____.**
A) experiment
B) survey
C) field study
D) case study

Difficulty: Moderate
QuestionID: 01-1-41
Topic: Doing Research on Social Problems
Skill: Apply What You Know
Objective: 1.7 Understand the four basic research designs and research methods that sociologists use to study social problems.

Answer: C) field study

42. **If you are able to apply the findings of your survey research to people who belong to the group but who are not in your sample, then you are _____.**
A) generalizing

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B) documenting
C) experimenting
D) observing

Difficulty: Moderate
QuestionID: 01-1-42
Topic: Doing Research on Social Problems
Skill: Apply What You Know
Objective: 1.7 Understand the four basic research designs and research methods that sociologists use to study social problems.

Answer: A) generalizing

43. **Yoshimi wants to know how watching a video on racial relations impacts attitudes toward Asian Americans. She takes a group of students who have expressed prejudice toward Asian Americans and divides them into two groups. She shows Group A the video on racial relations, while Group B does not view the video. Afterward, she measures each group's level of prejudice toward Asian Americans. The group that viewed the video on racial relations is called the _____.**
A) sample
B) population
C) experimental group
D) control group

Difficulty: Difficult
QuestionID: 01-1-43
Topic: Doing Research on Social Problems
Skill: Analyze It
Objective: 1.7 Understand the four basic research designs and research methods that sociologists use to study social problems.

Answer: C) experimental group

44. **If a person were to look at informal records such as journals, blogs, emails, and Internet discussion groups, then they are using the _____ technique for gathering information.**
A) participant observation
B) questionnaire
C) interview
D) analysis of documents

Difficulty: Moderate
QuestionID: 01-1-44
Topic: Doing Research on Social Problems
Skill: Analyze It
Objective: 1.7 Understand the four basic research designs and research methods that sociologists use to study social problems.

Answer: D) analysis of documents

45. **Vanessa wants to know about the safe-sex practices of the 4,000 students enrolled at her small, liberal arts college. She obtains a complete list of the names and contact information of the 4,000 students from the campus registrar and selects 500 people from the list to participate in her study. Because every student at the college has an equal chance of being selected for this study, Vanessa has a(n) _____.**
A) experimental group
B) random sample
C) generalizable finding
D) field study

Difficulty: Difficult
QuestionID: 01-1-45
Topic: Doing Research on Social Problems

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Skill: Analyze It
Objective: 1.7 Understand the four basic research designs and research methods that sociologists use to study social problems.

Answer: B) random sample

Essay Questions

1. **Outline the four stages in the natural history of social problems. Apply these stages to one social problem in particular and provide examples.**

Difficulty: Moderate
QuestionID: 01-2-46
Topic: The Natural History of Social Problems—Four Stages
Skill: Apply What You Know
Objective: 1.4 Identify the four stages through which social problems evolve.

Answer: The ideal answer should include the following:
- Outline four stages: defining the problem, the emergence of leaders, and organizing around the issue; crafting an official response, reacting to the official response; and developing alternative strategies.
- Choose one social problem to analyze and apply stages to.
- Provide examples as support.

2. **Discuss the five ways in which sociology can contribute to an understanding of a social problem. Which do you see as the most important aspect of the five ways that can help understand the varying sides of the abortion issue?**

Difficulty: Difficult
QuestionID: 01-2-47
Topic: The Role of Sociology in Social Problems
Skill: Analyze It
Objective: 1.5 Describe the contributions that sociologists can make in studying social problems.

Answer: The ideal answer should include the following:
- Discuss the five contributions that sociologists can make: measure objective conditions, measure subjective concerns, apply the sociological imagination, identify possible social policies, and reevaluate likely consequences of social policies.
- Explain abortion as a social problem.
- Evaluate which is the most important of the five with regard to the issue of abortion.

3. **Discuss common sense. Why is this approach not used by sociologists to solve social problems?**

Difficulty: Moderate
QuestionID: 01-2-48
Topic: Sociology and Common Sense
Skill: Analyze It
Objective: 1.6 Explain why common sense is not adequate to understand social problems.

Answer: The ideal answer should include the following:
- Define common sense.
- Evaluate the problems associated with the common sense approach.
- Conclude by discussing how solid research is needed.

4. **Explain the four basic research designs and four main techniques that sociologists use to gather information. Demonstrate your understanding by briefly outlining how you could use each to study some social problem other than abortion.**

Difficulty: Moderate
QuestionID: 01-2-49
Topic: Doing Research on Social Problems

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Skill: Understand the Concepts
Objective: 1.7 Understand the four basic research designs and research methods that sociologists use to study social problems.

Answer: The ideal answer should include the following:
- Explain the four basic types of research design: case studies, surveys, experiments, and field studies.
- Explain the four main techniques: interviews, questionnaires, analysis of documents, and participant observation.
- Outline the design of a study about a social problem using the above techniques.

5. **Although sociology does not necessarily entail taking sides on social issues, sometimes it is inescapable for us as human beings. What social issue would cause you to take a side, and how would you apply what you have learned in this chapter to help you in a study?**

Difficulty: Difficult
QuestionID: 01-2-50
Topic: Should Sociologists Take Sides?
Skill: Analyze It
Objective: 1.8 Summarize the disagreement in sociology regarding whether or not sociologists should choose sides.

Answer: The ideal answer should include the following:
- Explain why sociologists might avoid taking sides on issues.
- Choose and explain a social problem the student cares about.
- Apply theories and methods to that issue.

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Chapter 1

How Sociologists View Social Problems: The Abortion Dilemma

A. CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter examines how social problems are defined within the context of the issue of abortion and the roles sociologists play in objectively researching this topic. Historical information is discussed, including the role of the U.S. Supreme Court in supporting the two sides in this controversial topic. We also look at how sociologists use research to maintain their objectivity as the two sides organize, lobby, and utilize various techniques to defend their positions.

B. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

1.1 Understand the sociological imagination (sociological perspective) and explain the difference between a personal and a social problem.
1.2 Explain the significance of social location and explain why sociologists can use social location to predict *group* behavior but not *individual* behavior.
1.3 Explain why a social problem consists of both objective conditions and subjective concerns and why social problems are relative.
1.4 Identify the four stages through which social problems evolve.
1.5 Describe the contributions that sociologists can make in studying social problems.
1.6 Explain why common sense is not adequate to understand social problems.
1.7 Understand the four basic research designs and research methods that sociologists use to study social problems.
1.8 Summarize the disagreement in sociology regarding whether or not sociologists should choose sides.

C. CHAPTER OUTLINE

I. **The Sociological Imagination**
- a. What Is the Sociological Imagination?
  - i. This term was coined by sociologist C. Wright Mills and refers to looking at people's actions and attitudes in the context of the social forces that shape them.
  - ii. Another way of saying this is that we want to understand how our personal troubles (the problems we experience) are connected to the broader conditions of our society.
- b. Applying the Sociological Imagination to Personal Troubles
  - i. The sociological imagination invites us to place our focus on the social context to see how broader forces shape or influence our ideas and actions, even our attitudes and emotions. This social context occurs on three levels:
    1. The broad level includes historical and current events such as war and peace, economic booms and busts, or depression and

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prosperity.
2. The narrow level includes gender, race–ethnicity, religion, and social class.
3. The intimate level includes the relationships we share with family, friends, or co-workers.

II. **Social Location**

a. The term social location refers to where you are located in society (physical places). It also refers to what your family and friends are like and your personal characteristics, such as your education, age, sex, race-ethnicity, and marital status.
b. The Significance of Social Location
    i. Social location influences almost all aspects of our lives. For example, if you are a woman, social location even influences whether or not you will have an abortion.
c. Predictions from Social Location: The Group, Not the Individual
    i. Social location does not determine our actions, so sociologists can only make predictions about groups that follow well-traveled social avenues.

III. **What Is a Social Problem?**

a. Social problems are conditions in a society that a large number of people are concerned about and would like changed.
b. The Characteristics of Social Problems
    i. Social Problems: Objective Conditions and Subjective Concerns—Objective conditions are aspects of society that can be measured or experienced. Subjective concerns are the concerns that a significant number of people have about the objective conditions. Some people are concerned that some women give birth to unwanted children, while others worry that some women terminate their pregnancies.
    ii. Social Problems Are Dynamic, Evolving—Abortions were once illegal, but people were upset that women who wanted abortions could not get them and were concerned that these women faced dangers from botched, illegal abortions. But the success of *Roe v. Wade* caused some to be upset that abortions were now legal. Social problems evolve; they take shape as groups react to one another.
    iii. Social Problems Are Relative—People's values contrast so sharply that some view the *Roe v. Wade* decision as a victory, while others see it as a moral disaster. The fact that people's views differ so widely makes it more difficult to communicate with one another.
    iv. Competing Views—Our pluralistic society is filled with competing, contrasting, and conflicting groups and what is defined as a social problem depends on their power.

IV. **The Natural History of Social Problems: Four Stages**

a. Abortion used to be illegal in all fifty states, except under special circumstances such as when a pregnancy endangered the mother's life. During a measles outbreak in Hawaii, obstetricians performed abortions to avoid deformities. This began to change physicians' views, and laws changed in 1970 to make abortion a private, noncriminal act.
b. The First Stage: Defining the Problem, the Emergence of Leaders, and Beginning to Organize

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i. Defining the Problem—People have to become upset about some objective condition to define it as a social problem. The women's movement was significant in empowering women to demand the right to terminate a pregnancy legally and safely.
ii. The Emergence of Leaders—Vincent Yano, a Catholic state senator, took the public stage to share his religious opposition to abortion, but favored the repeal of Hawaii's law against abortion.
iii. Organizing Around the Issue—Joan Hayes, a former lobbyist, focused on the right of pregnant women to choose. She organized leaders in medicine, business, labor, politics, religion, education, and the media to support her position.

c. The Second Stage: Crafting an Official Response
i. Although legislators introduced several bills to broaden the circumstances under which abortion would be permitted, these bills did not pass. So public forums were held, which generated huge amounts of publicity. Hawaiians repealed the law against abortion in 1970.

d. The Third Stage: Reacting to the Official Response
i. Invigorating Activists and Stimulating Change—In 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down all state laws prohibiting abortions. This official response fueled the opposition and stimulated their efforts at bringing change.
ii. A Note on Terms—Proabortion refers to those who favor the legal right to abortion, and antiabortion refers to those who oppose this legal right.

e. The Fourth Stage: Developing Alternative Strategies
i. Alternative Strategies of the Antiabortionists—After *Roe v. Wade*, antiabortion groups began to try to persuade states to restrict this ruling. Federal funding was eliminated for government employees, federal prisoners, and workers with the Peace Corps, and they persuaded Congress to pass the Hyde Amendment, which prohibits Medicaid funding for abortions unless a woman's life is in imminent danger. They also established "crisis pregnancy centers" where pregnant women are directed to counselors who encourage them to give birth.
1. Strategies of Moderates—Mild strategies are used such as forwarding e-mails, running newspaper ads, writing to representatives, posting blogs, and operating Internet sites.
2. Strategies of Radicals—Radicals choose more extreme measures to try to stop abortions. These range from burning and bombing abortion clinics to kidnapping and killing abortion doctors.
ii. Alternative Strategies of the Proabortionists—Proabortion groups view the right to choose abortion as central to women's freedom from the dominance of men. One of their alternative strategies has been to stress how dangerous it used to be for women to have abortions.
iii. Making Mutual Accusations—Each side paints the other as grotesque, uncaring, and evil. Proabortionists accuse antiabortionists of caring more about fetuses than pregnant women, while antiabortionists accuse proabortionists of suppressing information about the health risks of abortions and murdering innocent, unborn children.

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iv. The Controversy Continues: The Supreme Court after *Roe v. Wade*—For the past four or five decades, U.S. presidents have taken strong positions on abortion and proposed nominees for the Supreme Court that reflected their positions. Three Supreme Court rulings have taken place since 1973's *Roe v. Wade*:
    1. *Webster v. Reproductive Services* (1989), in which the Court ruled that the states had no obligation to finance abortion.
    2. *Casey v. Planned Parenthood* (1992), in which the Court ruled that to get an abortion, women under age 18 must first obtain consent of at least one parent and that she be given materials on fetal development, as well as a list of adoption agencies in her area.
    3. *Gonzales v. Carhart* (2007), in which the Court upheld the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act that Congress passed in 2003. The proabortionists call this procedure intact dilation and extraction, while the antiabortionists call it partial birth abortion. This highlights the significance of terms.

v. The Controversy Continues: After *Roe v. Wade* Was Overturned—In 2022, the U.S. Supreme Court made a stunning decision when it overturned the 50-year-old *Roe v. Wade*. The legality or illegality of abortion is a matter for the individual states to decide. The struggle will continue state by state.

vi. No Middle Ground—On each side of this issue are highly motivated people who consider their view the only "right" way of looking at the world. There is no end in sight to this bitter, determined struggle, leaving a social problem destined to remain with us.

V. **The Role of Sociology in Social Problems**

a. Social problems are filled with conflicting emotions, views, and values. But sociology can help us see past the emotions that surround social problems.

b. Sociology as a Tool for Gaining an Objective Understanding of Social Problems
    i. Five Contributions That Sociologists Can Make
        1. Sociologists can measure objective conditions.
        2. Sociologists can measure subjective concerns.
        3. Sociologists can apply the sociological imagination.
        4. Sociologists can identify possible social policies.
        5. Sociologists can evaluate likely consequences of social policies.

c. Sociology and Values
    i. Because sociology cannot dictate that one set of values is superior to another, it provides no basis for making value decisions.

VI. **Sociology and Common Sense**

a. The ideas common to our society, or common sense, are not enough to adequately understand social problems since they can be built on faulty assumptions. Some of these faulty assumptions include the idea that abortion is the last resort for some women.

VII. **Doing Research on Social Problems**

a. When sociologists study social problems, they choose from several methods (ways of doing research). Which method they select depends on three factors:
    i. The question they want to investigate

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ii. The matter of practicality
iii. Ethics that may make some methods yield data in a way that is unethical.

b. Four Basic Research Designs
i. Case Studies—Used to gather in-depth information where the research focuses on one case, an individual, an event, or even an organization. They provide rich detail.
ii. Surveys—Focus on a sample of the group you want to study by using a target population. This allows you to use your findings to generalize within that group. Random sample is where everyone in your population has an equal chance of being included to provide researchers with the best sample.
iii. Experiments—In this method, people with certain characteristics are divided into two groups. The experimental group is exposed to an experience, while the control group is not. This is done to see the differences that exist between the two groups. For this topic, it would not be ethical to create a problem such as a pregnancy in order to use this design.
iv. Field Studies—Researchers go into a setting (field) that they want to learn more about.

c. Four Methods for Gathering Information
i. Interviews—When we ask people questions on the topics we want to explore.
1. Structured interview is where everyone is asked the same questions.
2. Unstructured interviews let people talk in depth about their experiences on certain topics.
ii. Questionnaires—People are asked to answer written questions. They can be:
1. Open ended—People answer in their own words.
2. Closed ended—People choose from a list of prepared answers.
iii. Analysis of Documents—Official records can provide valuable data to analyze social problems. They reveal people's behaviors and provide insight into how they cope with troubles.
iv. Participant Observation—Observe what is occurring in some setting.
1. Overt observation occurs when the researcher is identified to the people in the setting.
2. Covert observation occurs when people in the setting are not aware they are being studied.
v. Combining Methods—Sociologists often combine research methods to obtain different views on a social problem.

d. Striving for Accuracy and Objectivity—
i. Even sociologists can have biases, so safeguards help prevent biases from contaminating research. These include publication of findings, providing details about the methods used, and peer review.

VIII. **Should Sociologists Take Sides?**

a. The Issues Involved in Taking Sides
i. Sociology and Determining Morality—Research methods do not reveal

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what attitude or social policy is correct. Therefore, sociology has no basis to judge whether someone's ideas are right or wrong, much less determine the ultimate meaning that may underlie such issues.

ii. Taking the Side of the Oppressed—Some believe that sociologists have an obligation to do research objectively and should side with those who are being hurt and exploited. While this may be a popular view running through sociology, it does not give us a direction for taking sides in the abortion dilemma.

iii. Uncovering Values—Whenever someone takes any position on a social problem, values of some sort underlie that person's views. Sociologists are no exception to this principle.

iv. Taking Sides: Divisions and Agreement—Sociologists sometimes take sides as professionals. One of the popular views is that we should work toward changing society in order to help the less powerful, while others are convinced that the proper role is only to investigate and report research findings objectively. There is little room for middle ground, so most sociologists resolve this dilemma by separating research findings from their own values and opinions.

v. A Personal Note—The author hopes this chapter helps students acquire a sociological imagination that will allow them to work toward creative solutions for the pressing social problems society faces.

D. LECTURE SUGGESTIONS

i. Lecture Starters:

1. Ask students to define the significance of social location in researching social problems. Have them consider how social location might play a role in the decision to have an abortion or not and the type of variables that can influence a person.
2. Review the natural history of social problems through the four stages in order to emphasize that social problems such as abortion proceed through a developmental progression and show that these stages frequently overlap.
3. Ask students to describe the history of the abortion movement. What have they heard in the media—news, documentaries, magazine articles—on this topic? What are the tools each side uses to get its message out?

ii. Classroom Activities:

1. Ask your students to identify the top three issues they consider to be social problems on their campus. Ask them to specify what criteria they used in their selection and to identify some solutions their college or university could use to address these issues.
2. Ask students to explain why abortion has been identified as a social problem. Then ask them to describe specific strategies both sides use to defend their positions. Students could also describe how they would research the attitudes of students on their own campus and how that data could contribute to educating students on campus.
3. Form a discussion panel where students will present both sides of the abortion issue. Have your students indicate whether they hold the position that a fetus is or is not a human being. Further, have them specify the strength of their opinions by utilizing existing data. Randomly select students to study both sides, regardless of their

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opinions. Next, select an even number of students to represent both sides of the issue, say, four on each side. Each side will present its evidence and face an audience. The rest of the class will be expected to vote for one side or the other. The voting should be done anonymously to protect students' identities with this volatile issue. The instructor is encouraged to remain *neutral* throughout this exercise.

4. Ask a group of professionals who deal with abortion to come to your class and present their positions, such as physicians, nurses, Planned Parenthood representatives, or persons affiliated with pregnancy alternative groups. Students should prepare questions for this group, utilizing the section in the text on gathering information through interviews as a guide in formulating their questions. Your students can use their notes on the professionals' responses to these questions as the basis for understanding the process through which data are coded and analyzed. Ask your students to write up their findings and draw conclusions about what they have learned, both about abortion issues and in reference to conducting this type of research.

iii. Discussion Questions:

1. Ask your students to think about issues where they feel they would have different views than their grandparents. Encourage them to explore their thoughts using the sociological perspective—that is, there is a *social basis* for different values. Some sample issues to give them: Do women have the right to make choices about their own bodies? If controlled by law, under what conditions would women be allowed to or prohibited from having an abortion? Is there a stage in pregnancy that should limit whether abortion is considered? If women have the right to choose abortion, should there be age restrictions on who can make the choice? Should married women be required to secure permission from their husbands in order to have an abortion?
2. In the text, it discusses the importance of social location. Ask your students to examine the most recent data on abortions and to discuss the differences that can be seen based on social location. Ask them to discuss how age, race–ethnicity, marital status, length of gestation, and prior abortions impact who has abortions. Discuss if these results are surprising to them or if this is what they would have expected when examining the importance of social location.
3. Ask your students to consider such issues as the politicizing of abortion as a personal, medical, or moral issue and why it has become a social problem. Students can also describe the four natural stages that led to legal decisions. This topic can also be used to identify where the feminist movement is in contributing support to this issue. Feminist theory will be identified in Chapter 2.

E. SUGGESTED ASSIGNMENTS

Short Assignments:

1. The *sociological imagination* can be a difficult concept to grasp for many students, since they have had little experience in this regard. To help them, have your students write an autobiographical account of their own attitudes toward abortion. The paper should begin with a clear statement of their position, followed by a description and analysis of how they think broader social forces have influenced their personal views. Furthermore, ask them to consider how sociologists have a mandate of objectivity in constantly separating their personal beliefs from the topics they are investigating.

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2. Have each student bring a newspaper or magazine article to class that discusses a current social problem occurring in the community or college and a solution for it. The students can then discuss how they would go about assessing the effectiveness of the solution, considering the methods for studying social problems outlined in the text. Other methodological considerations can be introduced as this project is conducted. The point of this project is to sensitize your students to the idea that there are logical and methodological criteria that need to be considered in evaluating proposed solutions to problems.

Long Assignments:

1. Students sometimes experience difficulty appreciating the difference between a research report based on systematic investigation and a journalistic account, like those found in newspapers and magazines. Have your students secure an example of each of the above sources. For example, they could find an article from the journal *Social Problems* and then compare this account with any magazine or newspaper article. Provide your students with an outline of the points to be included in their critique, such as a summary of the research findings, the methods used, and what differences they discovered between the two types of accounts. Additionally, they can examine how unbiased each source was in reporting the information.
2. After reviewing the types of interviews and questionnaires that sociologists use in their research, have students select one type. Instruct them to write questions that concern people's attitudes toward abortion using either close-ended or open-ended questions. The questions should include probes to elicit explanations for attitudes; that is, responses of "yes" or "no" should be accompanied by follow-up questions that ask respondents to explain why they feel that way. Students might conduct interviews with a small sample of respondents to obtain data for their questionnaire. Encourage them to find people who are of different genders, ages, and race–ethnicities. Have them compile their results and discuss their findings with their classmates. In executing this project, students are encouraged to adopt a *sociological* perspective, trying very hard to separate their own values from their approach to the process of collecting information.

F. ANNOTATED SUGGESTED FILMS/TV SHOWS

1. *Reversing Roe*, 99 min. (Netflix, 2018). The film offers candid and riveting interviews with key figures from both sides of the divide, Intense and unflinching in its commitment to telling the whole story, *Reversing Roe* provides a gripping look at what's happening on the ground in 2018.
2. *12th and Delaware*, 81 min. (Loki Films, 2010). One street corner in Fort Pierce, Florida, is home to both a for-profit abortion clinic and a Roman Catholic Church–supported pregnancy clinic whose mission is to prevent women from obtaining abortions. While the abortion clinic takes precautions against threats of violence and fends off protesters, the pregnancy clinic actively spreads misinformation to women about the dangers of abortion. Though neither side will speak to the other, the battle over a woman's right to choose rages on.
3. *If These Walls Could Talk*, 97 min. (DVD). The movie examines the abortion issue through three stories set in different eras: the 1950s, 1970s, and 1990s.
4. *Quantitative Research: Methods in the Social Sciences*, 20 min. (Insight Media, 2012).

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This DVD discusses the methods used in quantitative research. It covers topics such as measurement issues, experimental design, statistical analysis, surveys, and sampling.

5. *Methodology: The Psychologist and the Experiment*, 31 min. (CRM/McGraw-Hill Films, 2009). Although this film focuses on the discipline of psychology, it is applicable to all of the social sciences and provides excellent illustrations of the basic steps involved in all controlled experiments. Many of the research methods and related concepts discussed in the text are illuminated in this presentation.

G. ANNOTATED SUGGESTED BOOK/JOURNAL ARTICLES

1. "The Struggle to Save Abortion Care" by Carole Joffe, *Contexts* (Summer 2018). The text examines the contemporary debate on abortion, examining abortion clinician perspectives and arguments.
2. *What Is Critical about Sociology?* by Steven Buechler, *Teaching Sociology* (October 2008, Vol. 36, pp. 318–330). The text calls attention to the distinction between sociological knowledge and common sense. This article focuses on the relationship between sociology and common sense and the implication of this linkage for the classroom.
3. *Inquiry-Guided Learning in Sociology,* by Maxine P. Atkinson and Andrea N. Hunt*, Teaching Sociology* (January 2008, Vol. 36, pp. 1–7). In the past, most social-problems courses were taught using "academic sociology." Today, more and more emphasis is being placed on the *applied* dimension in sociology. Here is a resource that may help integrate sociological theory with more applied dimensions.
4. *The Politics of Information: Informed Consent in Abortion and End-of-Life Decision Making*, by Sonia M. Suter, *American Journal of Law & Medicine* (Spring 2013, p. 7). The politics of reproduction dominates the political landscape now more than ever. One area of controversy has been informed consent statutes for abortion, which have been praised by the pro-life movement but derided by the pro-choice movement.
5. Roe v. Wade *and the New Jane Crow: Reproductive Rights in the Age of Mass Incarceration*, by Lynn M. Paltrow, *The American Journal of Public Health* (January 2013, p. 17). Efforts to establish separate legal "personhood" for fertilized eggs, embryos, and fetuses are already being used as the basis for the arrests and detentions of and forced interventions on pregnant women, including those who seek to go to term. Examination of these punitive actions makes it clear that attacks on *Roe* threaten all pregnant women not only with the loss of their reproductive rights and physical liberty but also with the loss of their status as full constitutional persons.

H. ANNOTATED SUGGESTED WEB SITES

1. https://www.pewresearch.org
   A Pew Forum research package provides an overview of the abortion debate; examines public opinion and religious groups' views on the issue and explores the legal and international angles. On the home page click "Research Topics," and then click "Abortion."
2. http://www.guttmacher.org/
   The Guttmacher Institute advances sexual reproductive rights worldwide through research, policy advancement, and public education. Source of multiple data worldwide. Infographics of data trends are available. On the home page click on the "Topics" button and then click "Abortion." Scroll down to "Resources" and in the drop-down menu for

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type click “Infographic.”

3. http://www.gallup.com/
   Gallup data on historical trends on abortion. On the home page type in “Abortion” in the search bar.
4. http://www.procon.org/
   ProCon.org is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit public charity. Its purpose is to provide resources for critical thinking and to educate without bias. It researches issues that are controversial and important, and presents them in a balanced, comprehensive, straightforward, transparent, and primarily pro-con format at no charge. On the home page, scroll down and click “Abortion” under the “More Issues” heading.

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