

Chapter 2: Poverty

Multiple Choice

1. Defining poverty based on annual income is an example of a _____ measure of poverty.
 - A. absolute
 - B. relative
 - C. means tested
 - D. subsidiary
 - E. oppositionalAns. A; pg 29

2. Defining poverty by comparing a person to others in the same society is an example of a _____ measure of poverty.
 - A. absolute
 - B. relative
 - C. means tested
 - D. subsidiary
 - E. oppositionalAns. B; pg 29

3. All of the following are examples of means tested safety net programs EXCEPT:
 - A. The Social Security Act
 - B. Temporary Assistance to Needy Families
 - C. Supplemental Assistance Nutrition Program
 - D. Women, Infants, and Children Program
 - E. The National School Lunch ProgramAns. A; pg 33

4. This program provides reduced cost meals for students between 130% and 180% of the poverty line.
 - A. The Social Security Act
 - B. Temporary Assistance to Needy Families
 - C. Supplemental Assistance Nutrition Program
 - D. Women, Infants, and Children Program

E. The School Lunch Program

Ans. E; pg 33

5. According to Karl Marx, class is primarily based on:

- A. income and occupation
- B. a combination of wealth and income
- C. ownership of the means of production
- D. a combination of wealth and status
- E. income and political power

Ans. C; pg 35

6. According to Max Weber, social stratification is primarily based on:

- A. income and occupation
- B. a combination of class, status, and power
- C. ownership of the means of production
- D. a combination of wealth and status
- E. income, race, and political power

Ans. B; pg 36

7. Social mobility is best defined as:

- A. the transition from immigrant to citizen
- B. the transition from one occupation to another
- C. the change that occurs when a person transitions from seeing poverty as functional to seeing it as dysfunctional
- D. the movement from one social class to another
- E. the movement from high school to college

Ans. D; pg 36

8. Which of the following sociological perspectives states that social inequality is necessary and inevitable?

- A. Functionalism
- B. Conflict theory
- C. Symbolic interactionism
- D. Feminist theory
- E. Structuralism

Ans. A; pg 40

9. According to Max Weber, all of the following would be examples of status EXCEPT:
- A. Race
 - B. Religion
 - C. Gender
 - D. Income
 - E. Sexuality
- Ans. D; pg 35
10. Ben's family was very poor growing up, but was considered middle class by the time he reached the age of 18. This is an example of:
- A. social stratification
 - B. social status
 - C. social mobility
 - D. social transmission
 - E. social power
- Ans. C; pg 36
11. Mary believes that she is poor because she feels inferior, powerless and lacks work ethic. Mary's beliefs best characterize:
- A. Lewis's culture of poverty thesis
 - B. Gans's ideas about the functions of the poor
 - C. Weber's ideas about class status, and power
 - D. Moore's ideas about welfare dependency
- Ans. A; pg 43
12. A janitor earns less than a school principal. Functionalist sociologists might argue this difference in income:
- A. ensures that the most talented people hold the most important jobs
 - B. prevents the social mobility of janitors
 - C. creates unnecessary divisions of income and power
 - D. makes it more likely principals will exploit janitors
- Ans. A; pg 40

12. The culture of poverty thesis is very similar to:
- A. Functionalist theory
 - B. Labeling theory
 - C. Social mobility theory
 - D. Social status theory
 - E. Conflict theory
- Ans. B; pg 43
13. Bob believes that there is a difference between the “deserving” and “undeserving” poor and that only the “deserving” poor should receive government assistance. Bob’s view best illustrates:
- A. Functionalist theory
 - B. Social mobility theory
 - C. Social status theory
 - D. Conflict theory
 - E. Labeling theory
- Ans. E; pg 44
14. Karl Marx argued that when we care more about the things we buy than the labor necessary to create these things we:
- A. fetishize commodities
 - B. alienate works
 - C. engage in dialectical materialism
 - D. weaken the capitalist system
- Ans. A; pg 44
15. Joe works in an automobile assembly plant. He has no say in what types of cars are made or how the cars are made. This is an example of:
- A. labeling theory
 - B. the culture of poverty
 - C. alienation
 - D. dialectical materialism
 - E. idealism
- Ans. C.; pg 44

16. The belief that wealth can buy influence, media access, and the support of policymakers best illustrates:
- A. functionalism
 - B. symbolic interactionism
 - C. conflict theory
 - D. integrative theory
 - E. feminist theory
- Ans. C; pg 44
17. The belief that those in power choose to “blame the victim” rather than accept any responsibility for poverty best illustrates:
- A. functionalism
 - B. symbolic interactionism
 - C. conflict theory
 - D. integrative theory
 - E. feminist theory
- Ans. C; pg 44
18. The U.S. poverty rate for 2013 is at _____ percent.
- A. 5
 - B. 15
 - C. 25
 - D. 35
 - E. 45
- Ans. B; pg 30
19. In 2013 approximately _____ Americans were living in poverty
- A. 1 million
 - B. 23 million
 - C. 47 million
 - D. 75 million
 - E. 121million
- Ans. C; pg 30

20. Sarah is paid minimum wage as a fast food worker. Although she has enough money for food, clothing, and shelter, her wage is significantly below the median household income for her community. Sarah can best be labeled as living in _____ poverty.

- A. absolute
- B. relative
- C. means tested
- D. subsidiary
- E. oppositional

Ans. B; pg 29

21. Paco is a child living in Haiti. Both of his parents are unemployed, his family is homeless, and they do not have enough money to buy regular meals. Paco would be considered to be living in _____ poverty.

- A. absolute
- B. relative
- C. means tested
- D. subsidiary
- E. oppositional

Ans. A; pg 29

22. In the United States, those in the top 10% of income possess _____ percent of the country's wealth.

- A. 40
- B. 55
- C. 75
- D. 90
- E. 99

Ans. D; pg 38

23. In 2012, the poverty threshold was just over _____ for a four- person household with two children under age 18.

- A. \$18,000
- B. \$23,000
- C. \$32,000
- D. \$44,000
- E. \$51,000

Ans. B; pg 30

24. The 400 wealthiest individuals on the Forbes 400 list have more wealth than the bottom _____ Americans.

- A. 20,000
- B. 100,000
- C. 750,000
- D. 50 million
- E. 150 million

Ans. E; pg 39

25. _____ is concerned with the relationship between perceptions of inequality and principles of fairness.

- A. Social empathy
- B. Distributive justice
- C. Social inclusion
- D. Social solidarity
- E. Dialectical materialism

Ans. B; pg 46-7

26. _____ involves the ability to understand the circumstances of the lives of others.

- A. Social empathy
- B. Distributive justice
- C. Social inclusion
- D. Social solidarity
- E. Dialectical materialism

Ans. A; pg 46

27. _____ looks at how being marginalized and stigmatized affects interconnections with others.

- A. Social empathy
- B. Distributive justice
- C. Social inclusion
- D. Social solidarity
- E. Dialectical materialism

Ans. C; pg 46

28. Since the 1980s, the tax burden on the wealthiest Americans

- A. has greatly increase
- B. has slightly increased
- C. has remained about the same
- D. has been slightly reduced
- E. has been greatly reduced

Ans. E; pg 47

29. A tax that places a greater burden on lower income people is known as a:

- A. progressive tax
- B. regressive tax
- C. distributive tax
- D. disruptive tax
- E. income tax

Ans. B; pg 47

30. A flat tax is an example of a _____.

- A. progressive tax
- B. regressive tax
- C. distributive tax
- D. disruptive tax
- E. income tax

Ans. B; pg 47

31. Just under _____ percent of Americans think their standard of living will improve.

- A. 55
- B. 60
- C. 73
- D. 82
- E. 94

Ans. A; pg 50

32. _____ of Americans believe people should help the less fortunate.

- A. 34.3%

- B. 55.1%
 - C. 91.6%
 - D. 85.3%
 - E. 72.9%
- Ans. C; pg 50

33. Most Americans think the government spends _____ on assistance for the poor.
- A. too much
 - B. just the right amount
 - C. too little
 - D. much too little
- Ans. A; pg 50

34. _____ of Americans think the government should reduce income differences.
- A. 21.4%
 - B. 45.6%
 - C. 60.0%
 - D. 74.8%
- Ans. C. pg 50

35. The _____ is the belief that anyone can rise from humble beginnings to become wealthy and successful simply by applying oneself.
- A. Culture of poverty thesis
 - B. Redistributive justice principle
 - C. Self-made man myth
 - D. Social mobility principle
 - E. Personal responsibility thesis
- Ans. C; pg 34

True or False

1. True or False. The social safety net in the United States can be traced back to the Great Depression.
- Ans. True pg 32

2. True or False. Medicare is an example of a means-tested program.

Ans. False; pg 32

3. True or False. Karl Marx believed there were three primary classes, all determined based on ownership to the means of production.

Ans. False; pg 35

4. True or False. Social mobility in the United States has increased over the past three decades.

Ans. False; pg 36

5. True or False. Functionalists argue some poverty is inevitable.

Ans. True; pg 40

6. True or False. Black men are over six times more likely to be incarcerated than white men.

Ans. True; pg 40

7. True or False. Lower-income workers are just as likely as higher-income workers to be under-insured.

Ans. False; pg 40

8. True or False. Household or family income has stagnated or declined during the past decade

Ans. True; pg 31

9. True or False. The poverty rate for female-headed households is higher than the poverty rate for male-headed households.

Ans. True; pg 31

Short Answer and Essay

1. Describe two different ways poverty is defined and explain how they are similar and different. What is a main criticism of each definition of poverty?

Ans. An **absolute measure** of poverty sets a threshold, usually based on annual income. A person or family with an annual income at the line or below it is identified as being in poverty. **Criticisms** of this measure include that the poverty line is arbitrary, making one dollar above the poverty line means you are not in poverty. Also, it is based on the amount a family will spend on a subsistence-level amount of food, rather than a basket based on a more nutritionally sound diet, and assumes that a family spends a third of its annual income on food is likely no longer accurate. Yet many low-income families spend about half their income on rent.

A **relative measure** of poverty looks at a person, or a group such as a family, in relationship to the rest of the community or society. Is the person or group far below or well above others in terms of income, quality of housing, educational levels or opportunities, household possessions? A criticism is that the relative measure is more arbitrary and can change based on the comparison group. This can make it difficult to make societal wide statements about poverty. (pg 29-30)

2. Compare and contrast Karl Mar and Max Weber's views of stratification. Which of these views is most closely related to the conceptualization of socio-economic status (SES) used today?

Ans. According to Karl Marx, social position revolved around one important factor: ownership of the means of production. In essence there were capitalists who owned the factories and other means of producing goods, and there was the working class who sold their labor in order to survive.

Max Weber identified three aspects of social structure: class, status, and power. Class refers to our position relative to the economic sector, such as proprietor, wage laborer, or renter. Status refers to social position in the context of characteristics like education, prestige, or religious affiliation. Power describes our political affiliations and connections.

Weber's ideas led to a conceptualization of U.S. social class as a continuum of socio-economic status (SES), rather than as a set of discrete categories that we can easily distinguish from each other. (pgs 35-36)

3. Describe the general functional perspective on poverty and inequality. Then discuss

three potential functions poverty can serve for a society. Finally, what is one important criticism of the functional perspective on poverty?

Ans. Functionalists argue some level of social inequality is inevitable and functional. Some positions in a society are more specialized and valuable. Only a few have the talent for more important positions. Learning those skills require sacrifices, so people must receive more resources and rewards to compensate

Different positions in the social hierarchy have different levels of prestige and esteem

Functions of poverty may include:

- Get “dirty work” done cheaply
- Encourage the purchase of lower quality products
- Give higher status to others (someone must be at the bottom)

One potential criticism of this perspective is that poverty can be dysfunctional if it is economically or morally costly. Other answers may vary. (pgs 40-41)