

CHAPTER 2

Poverty in the Canadian Context

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following is analogous to the “American Dream” as described in Chapter 2?
 - a. standard of living
 - b. meritocracy
 - c. social stratification
 - d. generational mobility

Answer: b Page: 32 Difficulty: M

2. The extent to which individuals and groups have access to food, clothing, shelter, education and health care is known as:
 - a. poverty
 - b. standard of living
 - c. life chances
 - d. class system

Answer: c Page: 33 Difficulty: E

3. All of the following statements regarding social class are correct, except:
 - a. A primary characteristic of the class system is social mobility.
 - b. Karl Marx believed that capitalist societies are divided into two classes—the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.
 - c. A class system is a system of social inequality based on the ownership and control of resources and on the type of work people do.
 - d. Max Weber believed that inequality and poverty are inevitable by-products of the exploitation of workers by capitalists.

Answer: d Page: 32-33 Difficulty: M

4. The current estimate of the number of people who die each year from hunger-related causes, world wide, is:
 - a. 4000
 - b. 400 000
 - c. 4 000 000
 - d. 40 000 000

Answer: d Page: 32 Difficulty: M

5. Sociologists refer to the hierarchical arrangement of large social groups based on their control of basic resources as:
 - a. social inequality.

- b. social stratification.
- c. social structure.
- d. social diversity.

Answer: b Page: 32 Difficulty: E

6. All of the following are factors that Max Weber included in his multidimensional class model, except:
- a. wealth.
 - b. prestige.
 - c. authority.
 - d. power.

Answer: c Page: 33 Difficulty: M

7. In 2009, the average net worth of the world's billionaires was:
- a. \$25 billion US
 - b. \$29 billion US
 - c. \$33 billion US
 - d. \$37 billion US

Answer: c Page: 33 Difficulty: E

8. Which of the following is not true of minimum wage in Canada today?
- a. It was introduced to ensure that employed Canadians would not be impoverished.
 - b. Minimum wages continue to keep Canadians from being impoverished.
 - c. Minimum wage was introduced in 1974 in Canada.
 - d. Today minimum wage needs to be at least \$10 per hour to keep Canadians working full time, full year, out of poverty.

Answer: b Page: 34 Difficulty: M

9. The lower class in Canada constitutes approximately what percentage of the population?
- a. 10%
 - b. 15%
 - c. 20%
 - d. 25%

Answer: c Page: 34 Difficulty: E

10. As of June 2009, the only Canadian province or territory to raise the minimum wage to \$10/hour was:
- North West Territories
 - Manitoba
 - Ontario
 - Nunavut

Answer: d Page: 34 Difficulty: M

11. Which of the following statements is correct regarding the poor in Canada?
- The poor make up about 40 percent of the Canadian population.
 - Children are not considered to be among the chronically poor.
 - Individuals who are unable to work because of age or disability are often in the category of the chronically poor.
 - Most people who are poor are homeless.

Answer: c Page: -34-35 Difficulty: M

12. Who is overrepresented among the ranks of the chronically poor?
- people unable to work because of their age
 - lone-parent fathers who are heads of households, along with their children
 - people unable to work because of a disability
 - both a and c

Answer: d Page: 35 Difficulty: M

13. According to George Laird (2007), Canadian homelessness researcher and Media Fellow at the Sheldon Chumir Foundation for Ethics in Leadership, the leading cause of homelessness is:
- poverty
 - substance abuse
 - mental illness
 - lack of work

Answer: a Page: 35 Difficulty: E

14. While the cost of living, as measured by Statistics Canada's Consumer Price Index, rose 9.2% between 2002 and 2006, average Canadian household incomes:
- decreased by 2%
 - increased by 1.7%
 - increased by 2.3%
 - flat lined

Answer: b Page: 35 Difficulty: M

15. When people can afford basic necessities but cannot maintain an average standard of living, the condition is referred to as:
- absolute poverty.
 - relative poverty.
 - lifestyle deprivation.
 - downward social mobility.

Answer: b Page: 36 Difficulty: E

16. The question asked by the National Council of Welfare, “How poor and how excluded are we willing to allow some people to be in our society?” draws attention to the issue of:
- values
 - absolute poverty
 - how we measure poverty
 - poverty rates

Answer: a Page: 36 Difficulty: C

17. Food Banks Canada (2009) reported approximately how many people experience food insecurity in Canada each year?
- 1 million people
 - 2.1 million people
 - 2.7 million people
 - 3 million people

Answer: c Page: 36 Difficulty: M

18. Housing and homelessness are one critical issue facing low-income and poor Canadians. The second most critical issue as identified in Chapter 2 of the textbook is:
- wage stagnation
 - food security
 - cost of living increases
 - inflation

Answer: b Page: 36 Difficulty: M

19. In its HungerCount 2008, Food Banks Canada (2009) reported that the primary source of income of household assisted by food banks in March 2008 was:
- employment
 - pension
 - employment insurance
 - social assistance

Answer: d Page: 36 Difficulty: M

20. According to the text, health, nutrition, and housing are associated with poverty because:
- the Canadian government provides medical care, food, and housing for most people who cannot afford to pay.
 - adults over age 65 are the key people affected by poverty, poor health, malnutrition, and substandard housing.
 - lack of money is the primary cause of inadequate medical care, poor nutrition, and homelessness in Canada.
 - low-income and poverty-level parents frequently spend money on entertainment, alcoholic beverages, and cigarettes rather than paying rent or putting food on the table for their children.

Answer: c Page: 39 Difficulty: C

21. All of the following statements regarding homelessness in Canada are correct, except:
- Hundreds of thousands of Canadians are homeless.
 - One-third of the homeless are families.
 - Elderly women are the fastest growing group of homeless Canadians.
 - 20 percent of shelter users are under the age of 18.

Answer: c Page: 40 Difficulty: C

22. Canada deals with the problem of poverty in all of the following ways except:
- as a structural or systemic problem.
 - individualizing the problem.
 - by funding or partially funding food banks and homeless shelters.
 - by encouraging people to volunteer at charitable organizations.

Answer: a Page: 41 Difficulty: E

23. In its HungerCount 2008, Food Banks Canada (2009) reported that the most common housing situation of food bank clients in March 2008 was:
- social housing
 - band housing
 - shelter
 - market renter

Answer: d Page: 41 Difficulty: M

24. Workfare is based upon the idea that:
- there is both a deserving and an undeserving poor.
 - all people should have the right to work if they want to.
 - all people deserve fair working conditions.
 - we need to break the cycle of income inequality.

Answer: a Page: 43 Difficulty: M

25. What has been used to buffer the worst contradictions created by capitalism's normal ebb and flow?
- workfare
 - education
 - the welfare state
 - newspeak

Answer: c Page: 46 Difficulty: M

26. According to sociologists, individual explanations of poverty amount to _____.
- blaming the victim
 - blaming the system
 - devaluing human capital
 - psycho babble

Answer: a Page: 47 Difficulty: M

27. _____ explanations for poverty focus on how the macro level organization of society contributes to problems such as poverty.
- Individual
 - Cultural
 - Structural
 - Macro-ideological

Answer: c Page: 48 Difficulty: M

28. When Engels theorized that knowing who one's genetic children were became very important under capitalism, the point he was making was:
- with the advent of capitalism came child labour.
 - the fact of private property was at the heart of patriarchy.
 - monogamy was especially important for the proletariat.
 - child labour began to run rampant in newly industrializing nations as capitalism spread.

Answer: c Page: 49 Difficulty: C

TRUE-FALSE QUESTIONS

1. The American Dream is based on the assumption of equality of opportunity.

Answer: True Page: 32

2. In high-income nations such as Canada, most people have similar life chances.

Answer: False Page: 32

3. The number of people who die from hunger-related causes each year is equivalent to three jumbo jet crashes each day with no survivors.

Answer: False Page: 32

4. Karl Marx believed that inequality and poverty were not inevitable by-products of the exploitation of workers by capitalists.

Answer: False Page: 32

5. According to Max Weber, prestige is more significant in determining class position than either wealth or power.

Answer: False Page: 32 - 33

6. Income is the economic gain derived from wages, salaries, income transfers, or ownership of property.

Answer: True Page: 33

7. The gap between the rich and the poor in Canada continues to widen.

Answer: True Page: 32

8. The most critical issues confronting impoverished people today are food security and affordable housing.

Answer: True Page: 35-36

9. In 2008, Alberta reported the highest percentage of food-bank clients reporting employment as their main source of employment.

Answer: True Page: 35

10. In an average month in 2008, Canadian food banks assisted over 700,000 people, almost 65% of whom were children.

Answer: False Page: 36

11. Relative poverty exists when people do not have the means to secure the most basic necessities of life.

Answer: False Page: 36

12. According to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (the CCPA), 44% of B.C renters spend more than 30% of their income on housing.

Answer: True Page: 40

13. Food Banks Canada (2009a) identified June 2nd as “National Hunger Awareness Day”.

Answer: True Page 41

14. In a Western European model of family policies, children are considered “lifestyle choices” and “private commodities” to be pursued with private means, whereas in Canada, children are considered a collective responsibility or “public good” who contribute to the well being of the whole society.

Answer: False Page: 46

15. According to the CCPA (2008), there is resounding majority support among Canadians to raise the minimum wage, improve income support programs to help poor families raising children and create low-cost child-care spaces.

Answer: True Page: 51

ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. Canada committed to the United Nations in 1995 to end “child poverty” by the year 2000. Yet, today, one third of homeless people in Canada are entire families, with children accounting for the fastest growing segment of the homeless population. Explain how this is possible in a rich nation such as Canada.

Difficulty: C

2. Describe the evolution of social welfare in Canada. What, if any, relationship exists between welfare and poverty? What have been the effects of recent workfare programs?

Difficulty: M

3. Describe what you might do to reduce poverty in Canada if you had the economic and political resources to do so.

Difficulty: M

4. Poverty can be seen and dealt with as either a structural problem or an individual problem. What are the consequences of taking each of these approaches? What approach has Canada taken so far and why have we taken it, especially in light of the fact that it has not been effective in reducing poverty to date?

Difficulty: C

5. Imagine that you have the economic and political resources at your disposal to develop and implement a Canadian poverty reduction strategy. Describe what a sociologically informed poverty reduction strategy might look like and the rationale or impetus behind such an approach. How do your suggestions relate and or compare to the poverty reduction strategies put forward by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives B.C Office (2008) as noted in Chapter two of the textbook?

Answer: C

6. Provide a snapshot of poverty in Canada. Discuss some of the consequences of living in poverty, specifically the impacts poverty exacts on poor Canadians' health, nutrition and ability to access housing.

Difficulty: M

7. Are you drowning in student debt as a result of pursuing post secondary education? Characterize student debt in Canada. Draw on material presented in Chapter two of the textbook to craft your answer.

Difficulty: M