

# SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Community, Policy, and Social Action

**Anna Leon-Guerrero**

*Pacific Lutheran University*



Los Angeles | London | New Delhi  
Singapore | Washington DC

# Detailed Contents

Preface	xviii
About the Author	xxiii

## Part I.

### **SOCIAL PROBLEMS—PERSONAL TROUBLES OR PUBLIC ISSUES?**

<b>Visual Essay I. Seeing Problems Sociologically</b>	<b>2</b>
---	----------

<b>1. Sociology and the Study of Social Problems</b>	<b>4</b>
--	----------

Using Our Sociological Imagination	7
------------------------------------	---

What Is a Social Problem?	8
---------------------------	---

<i>The Negative Consequences of Social Problems</i>	8
---	---

<i>Objective and Subjective Realities of Social Problems</i>	9
--	---

Taking a World View: A Social Constructionist Approach to AIDS in Africa	10
--	----

<i>The History of Social Problems</i>	12
---------------------------------------	----

Understanding the Sociological Perspective	13
--	----

<i>Functionalist Perspective</i>	13
----------------------------------	----

<i>Conflict Perspective</i>	14
-----------------------------	----

<i>Feminist Perspective</i>	15
-----------------------------	----

<i>Interactionist Perspective</i>	16
-----------------------------------	----

The Science of Sociology	18
--------------------------	----

The Transformation From Problem to Solution	19
---	----

Making Sociological Connections	22
---------------------------------	----

■ MAIN POINTS	24
---------------	----

■ ON YOUR OWN	25
---------------	----

■ INTERNET AND COMMUNITY EXERCISES	25
------------------------------------	----

■ STUDY QUESTIONS	26
-------------------	----

Visual Essay II. “Invisible” Dividing Lines	32
<b>2. Social Class and Poverty</b>	<b>37</b>
What Does It Mean to Be Poor?	40
<i>The Federal Definitions of Poverty</i>	40
<i>Who Are the Poor?</i>	42
Sociological Perspectives on Social Class and Poverty	47
<i>Functionalist Perspective</i>	47
<i>Conflict Perspective</i>	48
In Focus: Who Has the Real Power?	49
<i>Feminist Perspective</i>	50
<i>Interactionist Perspective</i>	51
The Consequences of Poverty	52
<i>Health and Health Care</i>	52
<i>Food Insecurity and Hunger</i>	54
<i>Lack of Affordable Housing</i>	56
Voices in the Community: Stephen Bradberry	57
Responding to Class Inequalities	58
<i>U.S. Welfare Policy</i>	58
<i>Life After Welfare</i>	60
Taking a World View: Child Care in Europe	60
<i>Changing the Definition—Redefining the Poverty Line</i>	62
<i>Earned Income Tax Credit</i>	62
■ MAIN POINTS	63
■ ON YOUR OWN	64
■ INTERNET AND COMMUNITY EXERCISES	64
■ STUDY QUESTIONS	65
<b>3. Race and Ethnicity</b>	<b>66</b>
Defining Race and Ethnicity	67
Patterns of Racial and Ethnic Integration	70
In Focus: Japanese American Internment Camps	72
Sociological Perspectives on Inequalities	
Based on Race and Ethnicity	74
<i>Functionalist Perspective</i>	74
<i>Conflict Perspective</i>	75
<i>Feminist Perspective</i>	76
<i>Interactionist Perspective</i>	76

<b>The Consequences of Racial and Ethnic Inequalities</b>	<b>77</b>
<i>Income and Wealth</i>	77
<i>Education</i>	78
<i>Health</i>	80
<i>U.S. Immigration: Past and Present</i>	81
<i>The Immigrant Experience</i>	84
Taking a World View: Global Immigration	87
<b>Responding to Racial and Ethnic Inequalities</b>	<b>88</b>
<i>Encouraging Diversity and Multiculturalism</i>	88
Voices in the Community: Rosa Parks	89
<i>Affirmative Action</i>	90
■ MAIN POINTS	93
■ ON YOUR OWN	94
■ INTERNET AND COMMUNITY EXERCISES	94
■ STUDY QUESTIONS	95
<b>4. Gender</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>Sociological Perspectives on Gender Inequality</b>	<b>98</b>
<i>Functionalist Perspective</i>	98
<i>Conflict and Feminist Perspectives</i>	99
<i>Interactionist Perspective</i>	100
<b>The Consequences of Gender Inequality</b>	<b>102</b>
<i>Occupational Sex Segregation</i>	102
<i>Income Inequality</i>	104
<i>Educational Attainment</i>	107
In Focus: The Pay Gap Between College-Educated Men and Women	108
<b>Responding to Gender Inequalities</b>	<b>109</b>
<i>Feminist Movements and Social Policies</i>	109
Taking a World View: Violence Against Women	110
<i>Title IX</i>	111
Voices in the Community: Bernice R. Sandler	113
■ MAIN POINTS	115
■ ON YOUR OWN	116
■ INTERNET AND COMMUNITY EXERCISES	116
■ STUDY QUESTIONS	117
<b>5. Sexual Orientation</b>	<b>118</b>
<b>Sociological Perspectives on Sexual Orientation and Inequality</b>	<b>119</b>
<i>Functionalist Perspective</i>	120
<i>Conflict and Feminist Perspectives</i>	121
<i>Interactionist Perspective</i>	123

<b>Sexual Orientation and Inequality</b>	<b>125</b>
<i>U.S. Legislation on Homosexuality</i>	125
<i>The Rights and Recognition of Same-Sex Couples</i>	125
<i>Employment</i>	127
In Focus: Gay-Friendly Campuses	129
<b>Responding to Sexual Orientation Inequalities</b>	<b>130</b>
<i>Family Legislation</i>	130
Voices in the Community: Jarrett T. Barrios	131
<i>Military Service</i>	133
Taking a World View: Gay Military Service Policies	135
■ MAIN POINTS	136
■ ON YOUR OWN	136
■ INTERNET AND COMMUNITY EXERCISES	137
■ STUDY QUESTIONS	137
<b>6. Age and Aging</b>	<b>138</b>
Our Aging World	139
Taking a World View: Aging in China	144
Sociological Perspectives on Age, Aging, and Inequality	145
<i>Functionalist Perspective</i>	145
<i>Conflict Perspective</i>	146
<i>Feminist Perspective</i>	147
<i>Interactionist Perspective</i>	148
The Consequences of Age Inequality	149
<i>Ageism</i>	149
<i>Age and Social Class</i>	150
<i>Health and Medical Care</i>	151
<i>Ageism in the Workplace</i>	153
Responding to Age Inequalities	153
<i>Social Security</i>	154
<i>Medicare</i>	155
In Focus: Senior Political Power	156
Voices in the Community: Doris Haddock	158
■ MAIN POINTS	159
■ ON YOUR OWN	160
■ INTERNET AND COMMUNITY EXERCISES	160
■ STUDY QUESTIONS	161

<b>Visual Essay III. What Is a Family?</b>	<b>165</b>
<b>7. Families</b>	<b>167</b>
Myths of the Family	168
Sociological Perspectives on the Family	170
<i>Functionalist Perspective</i>	170
<i>Conflict and Feminist Perspectives</i>	170
<i>Interactionist Perspective</i>	171
Problems in the Family	173
<i>Divorce</i>	173
Taking a World View: The Family in Sweden	174
<i>Violence and Neglect in the Family</i>	175
<i>Teen Pregnancies and Newborn Abandonment</i>	179
In Focus: Teen Parenting and Education	181
<i>The Problems of Time and Money</i>	183
Community, Policy, and Social Action	184
<i>Family Medical Leave Act of 1993</i>	184
<i>Community Responses to Domestic Violence and Neglect</i>	185
Voices in the Community: Wynona Ward	186
<i>Teen Pregnancy and Infant Abandonment</i>	187
<i>Supporting Different Family Forms</i>	188
■ MAIN POINTS	193
■ ON YOUR OWN	194
■ INTERNET AND COMMUNITY EXERCISES	195
■ STUDY QUESTIONS	195
<b>8. Education</b>	<b>196</b>
The New Educational Standard	197
Sociological Perspectives on Education	200
<i>Functionalist Perspective</i>	200
<i>Conflict Perspective</i>	200
<i>Feminist Perspective</i>	202
<i>Interactionist Perspective</i>	203
Problems and Challenges in American Education	205
Taking a World View: Educational Tracking and Testing in Japan	205
<i>The Problem of Basic Literacy</i>	206
<i>Inequality in Educational Access and Achievement</i>	208
<i>Violence and Harassment in Schools</i>	212
Community, Policy, and Social Action	214
<i>Policy Responses—The Basis for Educational Reform</i>	215

In Focus: NCLB and Standardized Testing	216
<i>Promoting Educational Opportunities—Head Start</i>	217
<i>Mentoring, Supporting, and Valuing Networks</i>	218
Voices in the Community: Wendy Kopp	219
<i>Antiviolence Programs in Schools</i>	221
<i>Does Having a Choice Improve Education?</i>	222
■ MAIN POINTS	224
■ ON YOUR OWN	225
■ INTERNET AND COMMUNITY EXERCISES	225
■ STUDY QUESTIONS	226

## **9. Work and the Economy** **227**

The Changing Nature of Work	228
In Focus: Recession 101	231
Sociological Perspectives on Work	233
<i>Functionalist Perspective</i>	233
<i>Conflict Perspective</i>	233
<i>Feminist Perspective</i>	235
<i>Interactionist Perspective</i>	236
Problems in Work and the Economy	237
<i>Unemployment and Underemployment</i>	237
<i>The Problem of Globalization</i>	239
<i>Contingent or Temporary Workers</i>	240
<i>A Livable Wage</i>	241
<i>A Hazardous and Stressful Workplace</i>	243
Taking a World View: Mexico's Maquiladoras	243
<i>Discrimination at the Workplace</i>	245
<i>U.S. Garment Industry and Sweatshop Labor</i>	245
Community, Policy, and Social Action	246
<i>Federal Policies</i>	246
<i>Expanding Employment Opportunities for Women</i>	248
<i>Worker-Friendly Businesses—Conducting Business a Different Way</i>	248
Voices in the Community: Judy Wicks	249
<i>Organized and Fighting Back</i>	250
■ MAIN POINTS	252
■ ON YOUR OWN	253
■ INTERNET AND COMMUNITY EXERCISES	253
■ STUDY QUESTIONS	254

<b>10. Health and Medicine</b>	<b>255</b>
Sociological Perspectives on Health, Illness, and Medicine	256
<i>Functionalist Perspective</i>	259
<i>Conflict Perspective</i>	260
<i>Feminist Perspective</i>	262
<i>Interactionist Perspective</i>	262
Health Inequalities	263
<i>Gender</i>	263
<i>Social Class</i>	264
<i>Education</i>	265
Other Health Care Problems	266
<i>The Rising Cost of Health Care</i>	266
<i>Inequalities in Health Insurance</i>	268
Community, Policy, and Social Action	270
<i>Health Care Reform</i>	270
<i>State Health Care Reforms</i>	271
<i>State Children's Health Insurance Program</i>	272
<i>State Prescription Drug Plans</i>	273
Taking a World View: Not-So-Foreign Models of Health Care	274
In Focus: H1N1—Swine Flu	275
Voices in the Community: Victoria Hale	275
<i>Work-Based Health Clinics</i>	277
<i>Community-Based Health Care for Minorities</i>	278
■ MAIN POINTS	279
■ ON YOUR OWN	279
■ INTERNET AND COMMUNITY EXERCISES	280
■ STUDY QUESTIONS	280
<b>11. The Media</b>	<b>281</b>
Sociological Perspectives on the Media	283
<i>Functionalist Perspective</i>	283
<i>Conflict Perspective</i>	284
<i>Feminist Perspective</i>	285
<i>Interactionist Perspective</i>	286
Taking a World View: Women's Feature Service, New Delhi, India	288
The Media and Social Problems	290
<i>Media Indecency</i>	290
<i>The Digital Haves and Have-Nots</i>	291
<i>Do the Media Control Our Lives?</i>	295
In Focus: The Death of the Newspaper?	298
<i>Do You Trust the News Media?</i>	298



Community, Policy, and Social Action	299
<i>Federal Communications Commission and the     Telecommunications Act of 1996</i>	299
<i>Who Is Watching the Media?</i>	300
Voices in the Community: Geena Davis	301
<i>Media Literacy and Awareness</i>	301
■ MAIN POINTS	303
■ ON YOUR OWN	304
■ INTERNET AND COMMUNITY EXERCISES	304
■ STUDY QUESTIONS	305

## PART IV.

## OUR SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL WORLDS

Visual Essay IV. Drug Legacy	310
<b>12. Alcohol and Drug Abuse</b>	<b>312</b>
Sociological Perspectives on Drug Abuse	313
<i>Functionalist Perspective</i>	314
<i>Conflict Perspective</i>	316
<i>Feminist Perspective</i>	316
<i>Interactionist Perspective</i>	318
What Is Drug Abuse?	318
<i>Alcohol</i>	319
Taking a World View: The Scottish Drinking Problem	321
<i>Tobacco and Nicotine</i>	321
<i>Marijuana</i>	322
<i>Methamphetamine</i>	323
<i>Cocaine</i>	324
The Problems of Drug Abuse	325
<i>The Relationship With Crime and Violence</i>	325
<i>Drug Use in the Workplace</i>	325
<i>Problem Drinking Among Teens and Young Adults</i>	326
In Focus: Alcopops	329
<i>The Increase in Club Drugs</i>	330
Community, Policy, and Social Action	330
<i>Federal Programs</i>	330
<i>Drug Legalization</i>	331
<i>Punishment or Treatment?</i>	333
<i>Drug Treatment and Prevention Programs</i>	334
Voices in the Community: Jill Ingram	336

■ MAIN POINTS	338
■ ON YOUR OWN	339
■ INTERNET AND COMMUNITY EXERCISES	339
■ STUDY QUESTIONS	340

## **13. Crime and Criminal Justice 341**

Sociological Perspectives on Crime	342
<i>Functionalist Perspective</i>	342
<i>Conflict Perspective</i>	344
<i>Feminist Perspective</i>	344
<i>Interactionist Perspective</i>	347
Sources of Crime Statistics	349
Types of Crime	350
<i>Violent Crime</i>	350
<i>Property Crime</i>	352
<i>Juvenile Delinquency</i>	352
<i>White-Collar Crime</i>	353
The Inequalities of Crime—Offenders and Victims	354
<i>Offenders</i>	354
<i>Victims</i>	355
Our Current Response to Crime	356
<i>The Police</i>	356
<i>Prisons</i>	357
Taking a World View: Policing in Brazil	360
<i>The Death Penalty</i>	361
Community, Policy, and Social Action	363
<i>U.S. Department of Justice</i>	363
<i>Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Programs</i>	363
<i>The New American Prison</i>	364
In Focus: A Public Health Approach to Gun Control	365
Voices in the Community: Max Kenner	366
<i>Community Approaches to Law</i>	368
<i>Prison Advocacy and Death Penalty Reform</i>	369
■ MAIN POINTS	370
■ ON YOUR OWN	371
■ INTERNET AND COMMUNITY EXERCISES	371
■ STUDY QUESTIONS	372

## **14. Cities and Suburbs 373**

Urban Sociology and Demography	374
The Processes of Urbanization and Suburbanization	374

The Population Composition	378
Sociological Perspectives on Urbanization	379
<i>Functionalist Perspective</i>	379
Taking a World View: Global Urbanization and Population Growth	379
<i>Conflict and Feminist Perspectives</i>	380
<i>Interactionist Perspective</i>	381
The Consequences of Urbanization and Suburbanization	383
<i>Affordable Housing</i>	384
<i>Household Crowding</i>	386
<i>Substandard Housing</i>	386
<i>Homelessness</i>	387
<i>Gentrification</i>	388
<i>Urban Sprawl and Commuting</i>	388
In Focus: Living Car Free	390
Community, Policy, and Social Action	391
<i>HUD</i>	391
<i>Renewal Communities, Empowerment Zones, and</i>	
<i>Enterprise Communities</i>	391
Voices in the Community: Magic Johnson	392
<i>Urban Revitalization Demonstration Program: HOPE VI</i>	394
<i>Creating Sustainable Communities</i>	394
<i>Housing and Homelessness Programs</i>	396
■ MAIN POINTS	397
■ ON YOUR OWN	398
■ INTERNET AND COMMUNITY EXERCISES	398
■ STUDY QUESTIONS	399

## **15. The Environment** **400**

Environmental Problems Are Human Problems	401
Sociological Perspectives on Environmental Problems	403
<i>Functionalist Perspective</i>	403
<i>Conflict Perspective</i>	403
<i>Feminist Perspective</i>	405
<i>Interactionist Perspective</i>	406
Social Problems and the Environment	407
<i>Climate Change</i>	407
<i>Air Quality</i>	410
<i>Hazardous Waste Sites and Brownfields</i>	411
<i>Water Quality</i>	412
Taking a World View: Home Sweet Landfill	413
<i>Our Water Supply</i>	414
<i>Land Conservation and Wilderness Protection</i>	415

Community, Policy, and Social Action	416
<i>Federal Responses</i>	416
<i>State and Local Responses</i>	417
<i>Environmental Interest Groups</i>	419
In Focus: Local and Sustainable Food	420
<i>Grassroots Movements</i>	421
<i>Radical Environmentalists</i>	422
<i>Is Your School Green?</i>	423
Voices in the Community: Chad Pregracke	425
■ MAIN POINTS	426
■ ON YOUR OWN	427
■ INTERNET AND COMMUNITY EXERCISES	427
■ STUDY QUESTIONS	428

## **16. War and Terrorism** **429**

Defining Terrorism and War	430
<i>Terrorism</i>	430
<i>War</i>	431
<i>U.S. Conflicts</i>	432
Sociological Perspectives on War and Terrorism	433
<i>Functionalist Perspective</i>	433
<i>Conflict Perspective</i>	434
<i>Feminist Perspective</i>	434
<i>Interactionist Perspective</i>	436
The Problems of War and Terrorism	437
<i>Domestic Terrorism</i>	437
<i>The Impact of War and Terrorism</i>	438
Taking a World View: Ireland and the Decommissioning of the IRA	439
In Focus: The Hidden Costs of War	441
<i>How Did This Happen? The Role of Intelligence and Security</i>	444
<i>Where Will the Next Attack Come From?</i>	445
Community, Policy, and Social Action	446
<i>Political Diplomacy</i>	446
<i>The Use of Economic Sanctions</i>	447
<i>Military Response</i>	447
Voices in the Community: Greg Mortenson	448
<i>Antiwar and Peace Movements</i>	450
■ MAIN POINTS	452
■ ON YOUR OWN	453
■ INTERNET AND COMMUNITY EXERCISES	453
■ STUDY QUESTIONS	454

<b>Visual Essay V. Thanks to Student Activists . . .</b>	<b>458</b>
<b>17. Social Problems and Social Action</b>	<b>462</b>
Social Problems and Their Solutions	463
Understanding Social Movements	464
How Do Social Movements Begin?	466
How Have Reform Movements Made a Difference?	468
In Focus: Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) as a Source of Change	469
<b>Making the Last Connection</b>	<b>470</b>
■ MAIN POINTS	474
■ ON YOUR OWN	475
■ INTERNET AND COMMUNITY EXERCISES	475
■ STUDY QUESTIONS	476
Glossary	477
References	482
Photo Credits	513
Index	515