

Answer Key

Social Structure and Inequity

- 1. C**—Middle-range theory is currently the de facto dominant approach to sociological theory construction, especially in the United States. Middle-range theory starts with an empirical phenomenon (as opposed to a broad abstract entity like the social system) and abstracts from it to create general statements that can be verified by data. This approach stands in contrast to the earlier “grand” theorizing of social theory, such as functionalism and many conflict theories.
- 2. D**—Prejudice is an affective feeling toward a person or group member based solely on their group membership. The word is often used to refer to preconceived, usually unfavorable, feelings toward people or a person because of their sex, gender, beliefs, values, social class, age, disability, religion, sexuality, race/ethnicity, language, nationality, beauty, occupation, education, criminality, sport team affiliation or other personal characteristics. Prejudice refers to a positive or negative evaluation of another person based on their perceived group membership.
- 3. B**—A social group has been defined as two or more people who interact with one another, share similar characteristics, and collectively have a sense of unity. A social group exhibits some degree of social cohesion and is more than a simple collection or aggregate of individuals, such as people waiting at a bus stop, or people waiting in a line.
- 4. B**—Max Weber used the *Gemeinschaft–Gesellschaft* dichotomy (first proposed by Ferdinand Tönnies) to accentuate the key elements of a historic/social change. According to the dichotomy, social ties can be categorized, on one hand, as belonging to personal social interactions, and the roles, values, and beliefs based on such interactions (*Gemeinschaft*, German, commonly translated as “community”), or on the other hand as belonging to indirect interactions, impersonal roles, formal values, and beliefs based on such interactions (*Gesellschaft*, German, commonly translated as “society”).
- 5. D**—The total fertility rate (TFR) is a measure of the fertility of an imaginary woman who passes through her reproductive life subject to all the age-specific fertility rates for ages 15–49 that were recorded for a given population in a given year. The TFR represents the average number of children a woman would potentially have, were she to fast-forward through all her childbearing years in a single year, under all the age-specific fertility rates for that year. Replacement fertility is the total fertility rate at which women give birth to enough babies to sustain population levels. If there were no mortality in the female population until the end of the childbearing years then the replacement level of TFR would be very close to 2.0. The replacement fertility rate is roughly 2.0 births per woman for most industrialized countries (2.075 in the UK, for example), but ranges from 2.5 to 3.3 in developing countries because of higher mortality rates. Taken globally, the total fertility rate at replacement is 2.33 children per woman. At this rate, global population growth would tend towards zero.
- 6. A**—A social identity is the portion of an individual’s self-concept derived from perceived membership in a relevant social group.
- 7. A**—Cultural mosaic is the mix of ethnic groups, languages, and cultures that coexist within society. The idea of a cultural mosaic is intended to suggest a form of multiculturalism, different from other systems such as the melting pot, which is often used to describe the United States’ supposed ideal of assimilation. The concept of ‘global culture’ also fits beneath the rubric of assimilation rather than multiculturalism, for example, in how a shared language gives people the chance to study and work internationally, not just being limited to the same

cultural group. People from different countries contribute to diversity and form the “global culture” which means the culture combined by the elements from different countries. This “global culture” can be seen as a part of assimilation that causes cultures from different areas to affect each other.

8. **C**—Steward and others were arguing that any attempt to apply the principle of cultural relativism to moral problems would only end in contradiction: either a principle that seems to stand for tolerance ends up being used to excuse intolerance, or the principle of tolerance is revealed to be utterly intolerant of any society that seems to lack the (arguably, Western) value of tolerance. They concluded that anthropologists must stick to science, and engage in debates over values only as individuals.
9. **D**—Culture shock is an experience a person may have when one moves to a cultural environment which is different from one’s own. It is also the personal disorientation a person may feel when experiencing an unfamiliar way of life due to immigration or a visit to a new country, a move between social environments, or simply transition to another type of life. One of the most common causes of culture shock involves individuals in a foreign environment. Culture shock can be described as consisting of at least one of four distinct phases: honeymoon, negotiation, adjustment, and adaptation.
10. **A**—The stereotype content model hypothesizes that stereotypes possess two dimensions: warmth and competence. Social groups are perceived as warm if they do not compete with the ingroup for the same resources and they are considered competent if they are high in status. The combination of warm but not competitive leads Richard to view Mexican workers with a paternalistic stereotype.
11. **B**—Ultimate attribution error is the best answer. The ultimate attribution error is a group-level attribution error that offers an explanation for

how one person views different causes of negative and positive behavior in ingroup and outgroup members. In fact, this particular study, Taylor and Jaggi (1974), was one of those that established the foundation of ultimate attribution error and support its general prediction that negative behaviors by outgroup members are more likely to be attributed to internal causes than negative behaviors of ingroup members.

12. **D**—Implicit stereotypes operate without conscious intention. Explicit stereotypes are the result of intentional, conscious, and controllable thoughts and beliefs.
13. **A**—If powerful people are less prone to empathy but, nevertheless, more likely to intervene to help a victim when others are present, then it is logical to infer that the bystander effect is not necessarily due to a lack of empathy among those who fail to render assistance.
14. **C**—Social reproduction is a concept originally proposed by Karl Marx in *Das Kapital* referring to the emphasis on the structures and activities that transmit social inequality from one generation to the next. It has been proposed that there are four types of capital that contributes to social reproduction in society: financial capital, cultural capital, human capital, and social capital.
15. **A**—The Robbers Cave Experiment by Muzafer Sherif represents one of the most widely known demonstrations of Realistic Conflict Theory. Sherif’s study was conducted over three weeks in a 200-acre summer camp in Robbers Cave State Park involving 22 eleven- and twelve-year-old boys who had never previously met and had comparable backgrounds. Sherif made several conclusions. From the study, he determined that because the groups were created to be approximately equal, individual differences are not necessary or responsible for intergroup conflict to occur. Sherif noted that hostile and aggressive attitudes toward an outgroup arise when groups compete for resources that only

one group can attain. Sherif also establishes that contact with an outgroup is insufficient, by itself, to reduce negative attitudes. Finally, he concludes that friction between groups can be reduced along with positive intergroup relations maintained, only in the presence of superordinate goals that promote united, cooperative action.

16. **B**—The out-group homogeneity effect describes how a person's perception of out-group members as more similar to one another than are in-group members.
17. **C**—The key term in the passage is 'sub-optimal'. When cognitive resources are more limited, the results suggest that people are more apt to behave as cognitive misers and imply stereotyping heuristics.
18. **C**—The debate regarding relative vs. absolute deprivation has important consequences for social policy, particularly on whether poverty can be eliminated simply by raising total wealth and regarding the role of egalitarian measures in promoting well-being.
19. **A**—Implicit Association Tests reveal stereotypes which are not subject to conscious awareness, ie. implicit stereotypes. Compared to self-report surveys, IAT procedures are much less prone to social-desirability bias. Both IAT procedures and closed question self-report surveys (questions which provide a limited choice) lend themselves to easy quantitation.
20. **C**—Within the theoretical framework of ambivalent sexism, hostile sexism reflects overtly negative evaluations and stereotypes about a gender (e.g., the ideas that women are incompetent and inferior to men). Benevolent sexism represents evaluations of gender that may appear subjectively positive (subjective to the person who is evaluating), but are actually damaging to people and gender equality more broadly (e.g., the ideas that women need to be protected by men).
21. **A**—Medicare provides health insurance for Americans aged 65 and older who have worked and paid into the system through the payroll tax. In contrast, Medicaid provides healthcare for families and individuals with limited resources.
22. **D**—Using this mode of reasoning, Ramaswamy can exclude Prime Minister Modi from the outgroup. This is a an attribution strategy within the context of ultimate attribution error to individuate the outgroup member and dissociate them from the group. Compared to the other answer choices, this is the one that allows dissonance between Ramaswamy's prejudice and his support for Prime Minister Modi to be resolved. This view allows for the maintenance of prejudicial beliefs through categorizing the "good" member as an exceptional case, while the other lower caste people are still seen as "bad".
23. **D**—The study demonstrates the role of illusory correlation in stereotype formation. Illusory correlation is the phenomenon of perceiving a relationship between variables (typically people, events, or behaviors) even when no such relationship exists. A common example of this phenomenon is the formation of a false association between membership in a statistical minority group (e.g., African-Americans) and a rare, typically negative, behavior (e.g., drug abuse). This false association is formed because rare or novel occurrences are more salient and therefore tend to capture one's attention.
24. **B**—Attributional ambiguity as an element of conceptual terminology might be a step beyond the scope of the MCAT. It's difficult to say. It's on the border. Be that as it may, the other three answer choices are basic terms for the MCAT and you should be able to eliminate them. Understanding why the answer is not 'stereotype threat', for example, is especially salient. Stereotype threat is a situational predicament in which the fear of conforming to a stereotype produces anxiety and hinders performance, most likely by depleting working memory.

25. **A**—Medicare provides health insurance for Americans aged 65 and older who have worked and paid into the system through the payroll tax. Part A covers inpatient hospital stays. Part B medical insurance helps pay for some services and products not covered by Part A. What this means in a general sense are outpatient services. Part C is optional. Part C offers Medicare recipients the option of receiving Medicare benefits through a capitated health insurance Part C plan. About 30% of Medicare beneficiaries choose to participate in Part C. Part D is the prescription drug benefit portion of Medicare.
26. **D**—Symbolic racism is a form of modern racism against black people in the United States, as it is more subtle and indirect than more overt forms of racism, such as those characterized in Jim Crow Laws. As symbolic racism develops through socialization and its processes occur without conscious awareness, an individual with symbolic racist beliefs may genuinely oppose racism and believe he is not racist. Symbolic racism is perhaps the most prevalent racial attitude today. Symbolic racism as the expression or endorsement of four specific themes or beliefs: 1) Blacks no longer face much prejudice or discrimination. 2) The failure of blacks to progress results from their unwillingness to work hard enough. 3) Blacks are demanding too much too fast. 4) Blacks have gotten more than they deserve.
27. **C**—As structures or mechanisms of social order, institutions govern the behaviour of a set of individuals within a given community. Institutions are identified with a social purpose, transcending individuals and intentions by mediating the rules that govern living behavior. The term “institution” commonly applies to both informal institutions such as customs, or behavior patterns important to a society, and to particular formal institutions created by entities such as the government and public services. Primary or meta-institutions are institutions such as the family that are broad enough to encompass other institutions.
28. **C**—In perception, an individual’s master status supersedes other identifying traits. The master status is often the most important architecture of individual identity.
29. **C**—Status is a social phenomenon rather than a biological one. Ascribed status is the social status a person is assigned at birth or assumed involuntarily later in life. It is a position that is neither earned nor chosen but assigned.
30. **B**—Most sociologists associate the term ‘anomie’ with Durkheim, who used the concept to describe how a person is integrated within a system of social norms and practices. Normlessness and anomie are not synonyms because anomie is a mismatch of norms and practices as much as an absence. For example, anomie could be used to describe the cultural results of the mismatch between middle class norms and the actual economic opportunities of young people during periods of economic stagnation. The concept of anomie is important to strain theory, which seeks to develop the relationship between criminal behavior and social structure.
31. **A**—Conflict theory represents one of the ‘four paradigms’ of sociology. The other three are represented by the other answer choices. Karl Marx is the father of conflict theory. Social conflict theory argues that individuals and groups within society interact on the basis of conflict rather than consensus. Marxist theory views class conflict as an engine of historical change, since conflict produces contradictions which are sometimes resolved, creating new conflicts and contradictions in an ongoing dialectic.
32. **B**—Social reproduction refers to the emphasis on the structures and activities that transmit social inequality from one generation to the next.
33. **C**—Slavery, in which principles of property law are applied to people, allowing individuals to own, buy and sell other individuals, represents the most extreme form of social stratification.

34. **C**—An ethnic group or ethnicity is a category of people who identify with each other based on similarities, such as common ancestral, language, social, cultural or national experiences. The linguistic and cultural diversity within Catholicism is too great for Catholicism to be considered an ethnicity.
35. **D**—Symbolic interactionism is a sociological perspective which developed around the middle of the twentieth century. Within the framework of symbolic interactionism, people act toward things based on the meaning those things have for them, and these meanings are derived from social interaction and modified through interpretation.
36. **D**—The melting pot is a metaphor for a heterogeneous society becoming more homogeneous, the different elements “melting together” into a harmonious whole with a common culture or vice versa, for a homogeneous society becoming more heterogeneous through the influx of foreign elements with different cultural background with a potential creation of disharmony with the previous culture. Historically, it is often used to describe the assimilation of immigrants to the United States.
37. **A**—Community rating is a concept which requires health insurance providers to offer health insurance policies within a given territory at the same price to all persons without medical underwriting, regardless of their health status. Community rating, as a basis for premium calculation, is fundamentally different from the usual method of determining insurance premiums, i.e. risk rating. The other three answer choices are also provisions of the ACA. The individual mandate is the requirement to buy insurance or pay a penalty for everyone not covered by an employer sponsored health plan or public insurance program. Guaranteed issue prohibits insurers from denying coverage to individuals due to pre-existing conditions. Essential health benefits are the set of benefits that health insur-

ance plans are required to cover for patients.

38. **B**—*Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* was a landmark decision by the Supreme Court of the United States. It upheld affirmative action, allowing race to be one of several factors in college admission policy. However, the court ruled that specific racial quotas, such as the 16 out of 100 seats set aside for minority students by the University of California, Davis School of Medicine, were impermissible.
39. **C**—‘Authority’ means the right to exercise power.
40. **A**—Radical movements are dedicated to changing value systems in a fundamental way. The Civil Rights Movement which demanded full civil rights and equality under the law to all Americans, regardless of race, exemplifies the concept of a radical social movement. A reform movement is the kind of social movement that aims to make gradual change, or change in certain aspects of society, rather than rapid or fundamental changes.
41. **C**—Queer theory has been associated most prominently with bisexual, lesbian and gay subjects, but its analytic framework also includes such topics as cross-dressing, intersex, gender ambiguity and gender-corrective surgery. Queer theory’s general approach is to question the concept of stable sexes, genders, and sexualities.
42. **A**—Social constructionism examines the development of jointly constructed understandings of the world that form the basis for shared assumptions about reality. A social construct or construction concerns the meaning, notion, or connotation placed on an object or event by a society, and adopted by the inhabitants of that society with respect to how they view or deal with the object or event. In that respect, a social construct as an idea would be widely accepted as natural by the society, but may or may not represent a reality shared by those outside the

society, and would be an “invention or artifice of that society.” A major focus of social constructionism is to uncover the ways in which individuals and groups participate in the construction of their perceived social reality. It involves looking at the ways social phenomena are created, institutionalized, known, and made into tradition by humans.

- 43. **B**—Deprivation amplification occurs when an individual’s disease risks are amplified by social factors such as inequality.
- 44. **A**—Of OECD member countries, only the United States and Mexico do not have universal health care.
- 45. **C**—Epidemiology is the study and analysis of the patterns, causes, and effects of health and disease conditions in groups of people and populations.
- 46. **D**—Epidemiological transition describes the replacement of infectious diseases by chronic diseases over time due to expanded public health and sanitation as a country undergoes demographic transition through stages of development.
- 47. **A**—Health equity falls into two major categories: horizontal equity, the equal treatment of individuals or groups in the same circumstances; and vertical equity, the principle that individuals who are unequal should be treated differently according to their level of need. In addition to level of need, there are other morally relevant considerations which are relevant in vertical equity such as, in the case of the question, the ability to benefit.
- 48. **B**—Durkheim used the concept of anomie to speak of the ways in which an individual’s actions are matched, or integrated, with a system of social norms and practices. Anomie can occur during periods of economic transition where dysjunction between norms of behavioral expectations and economic conditions leads

to normlessness, alienation and social breakdown.

- 49. **C**—The study found that ‘the association between disconnectedness and mental health seems to operate mainly through the strong relationship between perceived isolation and mental health.’ In other words, social disconnectedness is most strongly associated with worse mental health when it prompts feelings of loneliness or a perceived lack of social support.
- 50. **C**—One of the most frequently criticized aspects of the Hippocratic Oath is that the principle of patient autonomy is noticeably absent, both in its original version and the modernized version of the code. Note that choice ‘D’ is correct in the sense that the Hippocratic Oath does not discuss the obligations that patients have. However, the question is specifically dealing with the ethical obligations of medical doctors.