



SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND THEIR IMPACT ON COMMUNITY LIFE

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Article history:	Abstract:
Received: 20 th December 2023 Accepted: 08 th January 2024 Published: 24 th February 2024	This study aims to analyze environmental justice as a reflection of the issue of social justice. The authors analyzed the term "environmental justice," which is directly related to "social justice." The basis of environmental justice is the principles of a social organization projected onto the interaction between people and the environment
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A social problem is an issue within the society that makes it difficult for people to achieve their full potential. Poverty, unemployment, unequal opportunity, racism, and malnutrition are examples of social problems. So are substandard housing, employment discrimination, and child abuse and neglect. Crime and substance abuse are also examples of social problems. Not only do social problems affect many people directly, but they also affect all of us indirectly. The drug-abusing driver becomes the potential traffic accident that doesn't choose its victims by race, color, or creed but does so randomly. The child of abusive parents all too often becomes the victim or perpetrator of family violence as an adult.

Social problems tend to develop when we become neglectful and fail to see that serious problems are developing. Between 1988 and 1993, for example, the United States saw a phenomenal increase in youth violence. In my book about children who commit violent acts, I documented that children younger than age 12 cause one third of all fires resulting in death and that the average age of children who sexually abuse other children is younger than age 10. According to Osofsky and Osofsky, "The homicide rate among males 15–24 years old in the United States is 10 times higher than in Canada, 15 times higher than in Australia, and 28 times higher than in France or Germany" (p. 287). These are troubling examples of social problems that affect all of us.

Could these problems have been prevented if our social institutions had been working well? I think so, but this is where political philosophies are important to understand. Some people believe that government should be very involved in providing services to people most at risk. I don't know if the labels liberal and conservative have much meaning anymore, but in times past, we might have called these folks liberals. Liberals believe that where our usual institutions fail, the government and the private sector should help out. Conservatives believe that intruding in people's lives

often leads to a weakening of social institutions and the values that have served us well in the past. Conservatives might say that what we should be doing to reduce juvenile crime is to promote good family values and look to our traditional institutions to help prevent social problems from developing.

They also believe that the more government has become involved in people's lives in the past, the more serious our social problems have become. And finally, although this is true of liberals as well, conservatives believe in the concept of social capital: that "the good will, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse among the individuals and families who make up a social unit" will reduce social problems if used wisely. The tension between political philosophies is often the underlying reason why we respond to or neglect social problems. This tension can be seen in the grass-roots organizations that often develop in the United States, such as the Tea Party movement and the radical groups of the 1960s, that seek to correct political problems through direct and sometimes aggressive social action. In addition to liberalism and conservatism, there are four major political philosophies that affect the way we approach social problems in America. Libertarianism believes in maximum personal liberty and a small and well-defined role for government, and opposes most social legislation aimed at providing social justice and equity. The following position on a minimum wage might help you understand the position libertarians take on many social programs:

Skilled, experienced workers make high wages because employers compete to hire them. Poorly educated, inexperienced young people can't get work because minimum wage laws make them too expensive to hire as trainees. Repeal of the minimum wage would allow many young, minority and poor people to work. It must be asked, if the minimum wage is such a good idea, why not raise it to \$200 an hour? Even the most die-hard minimum wage advocate can see there's something wrong with that proposal. The only "fair" or



"correct" wage is what an employer and employee voluntarily agree upon. We should repeal minimum wage now

No one we know starts out life wanting to be a substance abuser or to be poor. Most of us want to be lucky, cool, rich, and successful. Some of us are, fortunately, but many of us aren't. Part of the reason for individual success and failure has to do with what we were given biologically in terms of good health, intelligence, and the ability to stick with projects and finish them. The other part of it has to do with the families we grow up in, the social. and economic conditions of our lives, and the parents, teachers, and friends who influence us. Some parents do wonderful things for their children and provide safe and happy homes. Other parents fight, use substances, and sometimes abuse and neglect their children. It doesn't take a genius to know that the child who grows up in a happy family has a better chance of being successful in life than the child growing up in a troubled family. Child abuse is everything it's cracked up to be and so are poverty, abandonment, unsafe neighborhoods, and poorly functioning schools. Some of us start life out on the right track, but a lot of us don't. Often those people whose families function poorly overcome early life problems by the inner strength some people call resilience. But many children who grow up in difficult, unloving, and abusive homes suffer harm to their bodies and to their spirit. It's difficult for them to be as successful as many of us who grew up in healthier homes. People sometimes pull themselves up by their bootstraps, but for those who don't professional help can make an enormous difference.

To help our most troubled families and the children who grow into adulthood having to cope with the burden of a great many early life problems, we've developed social programs and social service organizations to deliver those programs. We have organizations to help families when they lose the ability to work and to earn an income. We have other organizations that help families when the loss of work leads to the loss of their homes and health care. We have organizations to help people who experience mental illness or physical disabilities brought about by accidents, war, and health problems. The organizations we have developed in America come from our concern that all Americans should have an equal chance to succeed in life. Sometimes our helping organizations work very well, but other times they don't. There's no question that helping organizations reflect the concerns of the society. When the concern is great, as it is when soldiers come back wounded from war or

when people are hurt in terrorist attacks, the organizations often work extremely well. But when society is in a particularly blaming mood as it sometimes is about homelessness and poverty, then the organizations don't work as well because they've lost the support of citizens and funding is pulled back. I'm not apologizing for organizations that don't work well. They need our help and support. Neither am I going to brag about our organizations that work very well. I'm just going to clarify what they do, what they cost, and how well they're doing the intended job of helping people resolve the social problems discussed in this book.

Social work is the profession originally developed to work with a number of these social problems. But it's not the only helping profession: Psychiatry, psychology, and counseling are also helping professions working with people in difficulty. The difference is that social work is concerned about the internal side of a person's behavior (his or her emotional problems and problem-solving skills) as well as the external side of a person's life (the quality of family life, the school the child attends, the safety of the neighborhoods, and the amount of money he or she has to live on). In a sense, social work sees people from a total perspective and works to resolve both internal and external problems. But we use common sense. If people are chronically hungry, social workers try to eliminate their hunger while at the same time resolving the reasons for their hunger. In this way, the immediate need for food is met, and the likelihood of repeated need for food may be diminished.

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