

# Macro and micro approaches to sociology essay examples

[Law](#), [Evidence](#)



## **Introduction**

The study and practice of sociology is very wide and entails a lot of aspects. As such, there are several social theories that play a significant role in influencing the perspective that a person may adopt over a certain issue. In essence, the social theories are a form of empirical evidence that sociologists use and apply in their efforts to interpret various phenomena in the social world. In most cases, these social theories are used by social scientists in their day-to-day activities to provide a unique explanation of the events of the world. In most cases, the social theories often relate to the debates of the historical nature in determining the validity of arguments depending on the methodologies. In doing so, the theories also concentrate on the primacy of the arguments, either through the agency or through the structure, they take. In current practice, the social theories take a different nature. For instance, some of the theories strictly stick to scientific methodologies of analysis. In doing so, they employ the form of objectivity. In contrast to the theories that stress on the scientific methodologies, other theories, largely, stick to the normative positions. In most cases, the theories that use the normative positions critique the aspects that are present in the traditional and conventional thought.

In practice, social science theorizing largely contradicts journalistic arguments. The large number of differences that can be deduced between the two is an evidence of this. For instance, journalistic arguments, more often than not, tend to adopt the knockdown arguments. Their arguments have no proper background and it would present difficulties in proving claims. This is contrary to what social science advocates for. In most cases,

<https://assignbuster.com/macro-and-micro-approaches-to-sociology-essay-examples/>

social science theories are based on some empirical research and there is evidence for a given argument. This means that these theories can prove a given argument using some form of evidence or explanation. Largely, the journalistic arguments lack familiarity when it comes to the literature of the issue under discussion. The evidence that they rely on is not proven, and as such, they depend on anecdotal and ideological evidence. This is very different from what social science theories propose. Social science theories have evidences to back their arguments (Eisenstadt, 2005).

As already argued above, social science theorizing greatly differs from journalistic arguments. Social science theorizing takes many characteristics. For instance, their arguments are purely based on research and the predictability of certain norms and traits in behavior. This is achieved through constant analyzing of some situations and marking out the trends that follow. When this is done, it becomes easy to predict what the likely event is or what can be expected from a certain trend. Although not always perfect, the social science theorizing represents the better option when studying sociology and the expected behaviors. This is unlike the journalistic arguments that do not have a background on their assertions.

Micro sociological theories of sociology, in most cases, are based on the nature of day-to-day social interactions of the human beings on small scale. For instance, trying to understand an individual's reaction over some policy without taking into consideration what other members of the society may feel entails micro sociology. This, in most cases, represents the face-to-face analysis. In essence, the micro sociological theory bases its arguments on interpretative analysis. This therefore means that they do not rely on the

empirical and statistical observations. To a large extent, the tenets of the micro sociological theory are similar to the phenomenological philosophy. Micro sociological theories, in most cases, lack empiricism and in addition are based on the outer look of things, or rather the face value of the events. The fact that they do not have scientific backing makes them less believable and vulnerable to wrong interpretation. A good example for this is the perception people may have towards others based on appearance rather than reality. Ethnomethodology and symbolic interactionism represent the common methods employed in the micro sociological theory. Human behavior, as most sociologists have argued, is not best described by this theory because of the lack of preciseness it has. The fact that the micro sociological theory deals with a small scale of the sociological interpretations and sector makes it less appreciated when compared to the macro sociological theory.

The micro sociological theory exists in different forms. For instance, the theory exists as a body consisting distinct techniques related to the American sociology. These are the methods that different people employ in their pursuit to understand the social world and the interactions that take place in it. This, in essence, represents the basic perspectives that individuals employ to make their perceptions without being influenced by the environment in which they are. Social perception and social imagination play a key role in determining the perspectives that the individuals will have on making their decisions. Individual thinking and interactions are taken into account in this theory and in most cases; societal behavior based on large groups is always ignored. The micro sociological theory dictates that the

social structure's most important components are the defined social roles and the social status. This means that this type of theories lays much of its emphasis on the negligible elements in the society. It also connotes the notion that individuals play a major role in determining the manner and the social behavior in a particular society. Over a long time, the micro sociological theory has been essential in a number of fields, including the psychological studies (Giddens et al, 2001).

The macro sociological perspective, unlike the micro sociological perspective, lays much of its emphasis on the social systems at large scale, populations. A good example for this is the process of studying the society's reaction to a given stimuli. In essence, this analysis takes effect at the social structure and a theoretical abstraction of a higher level when compared to the micro sociological theory. The major difference between the two theories is that the macro sociological theory always focuses on large social systems. Although it sometimes deals with families, individuals and other constituents of the society, the analysis is in most cases done in relation to a social system that is large. Collectivity is the main function of the macro sociological theory, unlike the individuality that is employed in the micro sociological theory. As such, such analysis and perspectives are given depending on the group behavior, which in essence, is shaped by the individual behavior. In studying and analyzing the populations, several issues arise. For instance, the term society develops a more tricky meaning. In sociology, society is deemed efficient when there is some form of political autonomy and the constituents are organized in such a manner that they can perform cooperative activities easily. Having a population that is scattered,

making it difficult to coordinate them, therefore, beats the logic of the society. In predicting and interpreting their social behavior, consistency is highly valued.

Macro sociological theory, in most cases, takes four strategies. These may include the idealist strategy, the materialist strategy, functionalism and the conflict theory. All these strategies, in one way or another, try to explain the various perspectives of sociology. The idealist strategy, to a large extent, seeks to give an explanation to the social life's basic features. It achieves this through relating the social life to the human mind's capacity of creativity. In essence, there is an argument by idealists that the uniqueness in humans is based on the fact that different people attach to their actions different symbolic meanings (Mouzelis, 2005).

The materialist strategy explains the social life's basic features. In doing this, it takes into account the material and practical conditions of their survival and existence. Such conditions, to a large extent, may include the level of technology and the economic organization of the system. The functionalism and the conflict theory do not play a major role as the above-mentioned strategies. In most cases, they are based on the complexity of the social order and the uniqueness that each individual has in a society.

The above-mentioned theories have several influences to the current social order in the world. In an attempt to understand sociology, one has to first understand the two theories and determine which theory he will analyze the society from. Micro sociology, to a large extent, represents the valid option in interpreting the human relations (Spencer, 2001). On the other hand, studying the entire society's trends calls for the employment of the macro

sociological theory since it will be difficult to analyze individual behaviors and arrive at a valid conclusion.

Both the macro and micro sociological theories have their own strengths and weaknesses that may make people to prefer or avoid applying them in studying the behavior in a society. In the macro sociological theory, the strengths and weaknesses lie in the strategies of functionalism and conflict theory. The functionalist theory, as already argued above, is based on a community's social patterns, social systems and its characteristics. In essence, one weakness with the macro sociological theory is as regards to its generalization mechanisms. In practice, it is very difficult to arrive at a proper position since the society is comprised of individuals, with each individual having their unique characteristics. The macro sociological theory therefore attempts to 'find an average' of these characteristics. In doing so, the extremes will be ignored. This may create a wrong picture more so in making choices. This is where the micro sociological theory comes in to solve the problem. In essence, the micro sociological theory will give the fine details of the individuals, hence making it possible for one to understand what to expect from a given society.

On a similar note, the micro sociological has its weaknesses too. For instance, despite the fact that it can provide information as to the uniqueness of individuals, there comes a time when a large society is up for analysis. At such a moment, the micro sociological theory will play no crucial part, and as such, the macro sociological theory will effectively come in. Both theories can therefore be seen as complementing each other's weaknesses.

## **References**

Eisenstadt, S. N., &Helle, H. J 2005, Perspectives on sociological theory.

London: SAGE Publications.

Giddens, A., &Birdsall, K, 2001, Sociology, Cambridge, England, Polity Press.

Mouzelis, N. P. 2005, Sociological theory: What went wrong? : Diagnosis and Remedies. London, Routledge.

Spencer, H. 2001, The study of sociology, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press.