

# Example of essay on theoretical perspective on poverty

[Technology](#), [Development](#)



Theories have been used to expound on some aspects such as poverty and inequality in society including conflict and functionalism theories. Conflict theory was founded by Karl Marx and is based on exploitation, inequality and power. In addition, the theory proposes that the groups with more power in the society use their power to exploit individuals with less power. On the other hand, Durkheim's theory of functionalism argues that the society is comprised of interdependent parts, which work together, to fulfill the needs of the society.

Conflict theory proposes capitalism as the fundamental source of inequalities and poverty in the society. This causes inequality through the dominant creating rules for opportunity and success in society and denying the same to subordinate groups; this results to two groups known as proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie is the owners of the means of production while proletariat does not own any means of production and have to sell their labor to get wages (Bartos 45). The Bourgeoisie remains competitive through exploitation of the proletariat which is their way of accumulating capital. The only way to end this inequality is through revolution and socialism or common ownership of property.

Functionalists argue that poverty has social and economic functions in the society. Poverty ensures that dirty work is done in the society through offering menial job for the poor. Poverty serves as a basis for comparison of status. The poor are labeled as unworthy while the wealthy are regarded as socially valuable. Poverty also benefits the affluent through cheap labor and clients of illegal businesses such as prostitution and drugs. Poverty provides social mobility to the affluent such as business owners in poor society and

slum lords. Additionally, poverty provides a way to dispose surplus goods in the society because the poor uses goods that are not wanted by others such as old clothes and automobiles.

Notably, poverty also has many dysfunctions in the society thus; there are functional alternatives for it. They include paying decent wages to dirty workers, which would ensure that the illegal affluent that benefit from the poor would choose other roles in society. Additionally, contribution for the poor towards social mobility of the affluent could be maintained without offering low incomes to the poor. This will offer an opportunity for the poor to gain social mobility (Martindale 89). The functionalists believe that the most talented people occupy the highest positions in the society. In contrast, conflict theories argue that the dominant individuals are responsible for monopolizing positions of power in society and maintenance of power through generations as a way of alienating the subordinate groups. Functionalists argue that the most fundamental positions in society receive the best rewards. Conflict theory contrasts this through their argument that the dominant groups possess excessive power in order to define the positions that are socially rewarded. The functionalists are strong defenders of the status quo thus avoiding change believing that individuals should cooperate to bring change. Contrary, conflict theorists support social change through social revolution and challenge the status quo.

Functionalists believe that discrimination and stereotypes exist so as to bring positive social ends and, therefore, support discrimination of the subordinates. Contrary, conflict theorists believe that discrimination and stereotypes should be ended and, therefore, supports social change as a

continuous, rapid and inevitable (Bartos 94). In spite of these differences, the two theorists believe that discrimination and stereotypes serve to benefit the dominant groups in society

## **Works Cited**

Bartos, Otomar J., And Paul Ernest Wehr. Using conflict theory. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. Print.

Martindale, Don. Functionalism in the social sciences: the strength and limits of functionalism in anthropology, economics, political science, and sociology. Philadelphia: American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1965. Print.