

Different social  
ecological  
perspectives  
sociology essay



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Social ecological perspective is a discipline which tries to look into various results and correlation of social factors in the environment. It also examines the interaction among people within a certain natural environment and the challenges on the important affordances for knowledge which are provided by the very environment. Generally it provides the insight on how people in a certain environment influence one another in a way (Naess, 1989). This way, ecology is both reactive and creative; it also makes people contemplate on the changes within the system and around the environment. Social ecological systems go beyond an individual, since the world we live in have a greater impact on how we live.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) argues that it is not only the environment which affects the person directly, but there are some other layers factors. According to his research which basically began with thesis equations Bronfenbrenner states that behavior depends on the environment and the person. Bronfenbrenner (1979) also considered; community, individual, culture and environment as nestled factors. This is clearly illustrated in Charles dawn book on web of life. There are several outcomes which results from cross-level influences and interactions between and within levels that social ecology perspectives address. Interactions are parallels or discontinuities and cross-level effects according to (Rousseau & House 1994). Therefore this paper is going to provide a comprehensive overview on the theoretical concepts and constructs relating to social ecological perspectives, review on discrimination and inequality in relationship to this topic and then conclude by highlighting on how to achieve a better social perspective.

Levels of influence comprises of; Individual, interpersonal, organizational, community and public policies. The social ecological perspective looks into correlated relationship which occurs between individual and environment they live in.

In individual levels people are mandated to implement and enhance the lifestyle fluctuations to minimize risk and have better health. Family history, personal attitudes, beliefs all contribute to individual influence. They can be eliminated by encouraging good beliefs, behavior and attitude. Individuals who habitually engage in many unhealthy and dangerous behavior, for example intake of saturated fats, irregular sleep, lack of frequent physical exercises, alcoholism, high level of frequent stresses, live unhealthy lifestyles which can be controlled at individual level. The change of single pattern of unhealthy behavior can be modified. This can be achieved through social influence patterns like modification of an individual's behavior, attitude and thoughts in terms of actions and the way others feel. Some of the ways in which to achieve social influence is; cognitive change where there is modification of individuals opinions and how he/she feels. Behavior modification entails individuals change on how he or she views the surrounding and effective modification with a shift with ones assessment of entities.

Interpersonal levels are a collection factors which raises risk as a result of relationship with family, peers and intimate partners. These are seen to modify behavior and experiences. These can be eliminated by promoting peer programs that educate on equality, trust and mutual respect among others. These interpersonal attributes are strong on how an individual

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perceives oneself. These qualities and factors can be learned, like in membership of a group, but many are ingrained (e. g., ethnicity, gender). “ In the interpersonal sphere, there are also many components of the individual, including psychological and cognitive factors, like personality, knowledge and beliefs” (Gregson, 2001). Gregson continues by stating that; The individual in his or her own micro system is constantly shaped, not only by the environment, but by any encounter or other individual they come in contact with”. This shaping is well explored in child development, as it would be unreasonable to believe a child is solely a product of the societal environment. There are multiple, simultaneous influences in child behavior and learning including culture, school, teacher, parental support and education level, involvement in extracurricular activities, etc. Examples of Microsystems outside the self also include groups of friends, family, unorganized athletics, or social clubs (Gregson, 2001)

The community level factor depends on an individual’s experiences and how he/she interacts with community in general involves social environment for example a neighborhood, schools and work places. “ This can be promoted through social and norm campaigns based on trust, respect among others. A clear illustration is overweight and obesity where people normally believe that it is an individual’s responsibility which is correct to some degree” (David, 2001). The community also plays a crucial role for example where work places, schools food stores or restaurants do not provide healthy food options, in the neighborhood and where there are no fields for jogging, places for exercises, safe and accessible facilities for children to play, no proper healthy facilities and where physical education is not offered in <https://assignbuster.com/different-social-ecological-perspectives-sociology-essay/>

school. All this are community responsibilities. According to David (2001) the community can promote healthy behavior through implementation of policies and environmental factors such as healthy cafeteria meals, incentives for bicycles and pedestrian commuters, smoke free workplaces, sidewalks and bike paths, insurance cover for preventive services like tobacco cessation and work site wellness programs. These can lower the risks of diseases like stroke, diabetes, cancer and other heart diseases. The barriers to healthy behaviors are interwoven among the community in general. When these barriers are eliminated or lowered, behavior change will be achieved. Behavior change will then become more sustainable, this is according to James (2003). According to Gregson (2001) on the other hand these aspects can be rules, policies, and acceptable business etiquette within a more formal organization. He further argues that “ there are some organizations that foster entirely different atmospheres than other corporations giving an example of Google, where employees may wear pajamas to the office”. “ The organizational component is especially influential with younger, more impressionable employees, as it helps to shape the ethics and expectations of a typical organization for these individuals. Examples include schools, companies, churches, and sports teams” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bronfenbrenner also claimed that the richer the medium for communication in this system, the more influential it is on the micro system.

Societal levels are larger things that influence individual behavior, they include; religion, gender, societal norms, cultural beliefs and societal policies.

This can be prevented by working in conjunction with social bodies associated with policies, mutual respect, social norms, gender equality, mutual respect, trust, and foster intimate relationship. These influences are more easily seen than the other factors, mainly due to the magnitude of the impact. Examples of significant intercultural effects include Communism, Western culture, Military, Islam, and Christianity. For instance, the macro system of Communism is a Marxist philosophy that believes that wealth should be shared in the macro system. A Communist country, such as Cuba (exo), governs and regulates the environment within which corporations (meso) and society or individuals (micro) exist. Media plays a significant role on all levels, as it communicates information and assists in the development of expectations for all individuals in the respective culture (Bronfenbrenner 1979)

The best way of achieving healthy behavior is put in to consideration of factors at all level which are; interpersonal, organizational, individual, public and individual. By so doing, behavior change will be implemented and sustained.

**In the corporate scenario a lot of disagreements are understandable others while others are explicit. In these scenarios there are stakeholders who are workers, clients, shareholders and managers who normally raise conflicts. Interactive and cross-level consequences while observing from a different angle are seen, this is because a lot of companies think they only have the duty of creating monetary value for the stakeholders whilst upholding responsibilities to their customers. In some organizations, it is usually hard to tell events where devotion is taken too far towards owners and workers at the expense of the clients.**

Directions of influence

“ Isomorphism’s are parallels that cause impact on one level then the resulting impact affects other levels” (Rinderle 2006). People carrying out Researcher on isomorphic models are required to see an equal impact on both the magnitude and direction in cases where at least one cause changes in level shifts.

Discontinuities are basically antonyms of isomorphism. They cause effect one level or group hence producing an unequal, potentially in the opposite direction, they cause impact on at least one or more groups.

Top-down effects are most prominent of any social ecological component, according to5 (MCLeroy 1996) the environmental outcomes shapes the persons behavior. The nested factors are basics which react while in crisis situations (Rinderle 2006). “ OK-FIRST” is a program that alienates people on how to help others respond to whether related dangers in a better way (Oetz 2006). Historical interactions also shape peoples conflict behavior. This is

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clearly illustrated in several situations as observed in the many conflicts of the society. Media also plays an important role in strengthening these issues.

Bottom-up effects illustrate how people or society affect the upper levels, as in how people form coalitions to achieve their goals (Rinderle 2006). There are also effects on cultures as a result of global corporations' existence in some countries. For example, China has raised the accessibility of news to reach a larger audience in a Communist nation. Guerrero (2006) shows emotions are as a result of feelings which includes anger, jealousy, greed, guilt among others and the feelings affects the events likely to happen.

Interactive effects are interdependent variables and taking place simultaneously in many groups (Rousseau & House 1994). For example in Italy where culturally different workgroups, conflicts among group members may occur. This deters relationship impacts in accomplishing the goal of group members for an organization and learning at the personal level. Thus technology also plays an important role in community, cultures, interpersonal conflict and organization (Rousseau & House 1994).

## **Political conflict**

The role of politics is in the making up of decisions. Politics encompasses the appeasing of all stakeholders towards realizing an ultimate objective, "decision may be required of an individual, organization, community, or country. A decision a congressman makes affects anyone in his or her jurisdiction. If one makes decision not to vote for the President of the United States, one has given oneself no voice in the election" (Ungar, 2002). If a lot other people decide not to put in their efforts to vote, they would have



unintentionally permitted a greater part of others to carry the day on their behalf. Internationally if the administration of a country like America decides to inhabit another nation say in the Middle East, this will not only have an influence on the administration of that country but it will also have an effect on American soldiers and the whole environment where they come from. Another thing is that when America uses funds on conflicts that are political in nature, the value of the U. S. currency may be negatively affected. This shows that many cross-level and interactive consequences of a decision can arise. An example of this is like the act of a terrorist could possibly interrupt with the lives of soldiers, the lives of people close to them and the country at large.

## **Economics**

Basically, from a top-down view point, the physical environment determines a considerable extend to the lifestyle of a person and the country as whole. If the area is hilly or very dry and there is limited land for agricultural activities, the nation generally will not grow compared to other countries. The general, human habits, cultural characteristics and economics are shaped by geography and output is determined by natural resources, technology and human resources. Entrepreneurial mind has an impact on technology. These indicates that there exits bottom-up effects on economics.

## Health

People's efforts to modify their own healthy practices are mostly dictated by social, economic and cultural setbacks. Poor educational status, time and money, energy and chronic exposure to neighborhood violent and proximity

to friends and family members who often exhibit healthy threatening behavior are some of situation factors that can affect people's best efforts that and intentions to improve their health practices.

There are several ecological variables that can improve or stop danger to individuals healthy physically. To eliminate diseases, an individual should keep off from an environment in which they may be more exposed to virus or where there body defense system would be compromised. This also entails possibly avoiding workgroup if they are breathing or inhalation dangers or keeping off from a sick work mate. Some environments are good for health benefits. Staying around people who are physically fit will encourage you to be active, good diet and physical exercises in general. The state putting a ban on saturated fats manufacture may add value to top-down effect on individual's health in a country.

“ Efforts to persuade a person to adopt health practices can be unfruitful if the person is not ready to embrace the suggested behavior. This can also be limited by exposure to environmental toxins and safety hazards” (Haekel, 2003). The current research studied predictors of health-related social influence tactic use in close relationships. According to the social ecological perspective, predictors were grouped as reflecting characteristics of the agent of social influence, characteristics of the target of social influence, characteristics of the agent and target's relationship, and characteristics of the social influence situation. One hundred and nine spouses reported on situations in which each partner was attempting to influence his or her spouse to change a health-related behavior. Using the actor-partner interdependence analysis approach, results revealed only actor effects for <https://assignbuster.com/different-social-ecological-perspectives-sociology-essay/>

characteristics of the agent, primarily partner effects for characteristics of the target, and both actor and partner effects for characteristics of the situation when predicting health-related tactic use. Effects for relationship characteristics only emerged in interactions with respondent sex. These results indicate that social influence in marriage involves reciprocity and interdependence.

Physical and social environment can serve as a media for disease transmission; waterborne and airborne diseases. The environment can also act as a stressor exerting detrimental effects on people's mood, performance and physiology as a result of their exposure to uncontrollable demands such as noise, political upheaval or interpersonal relationship. The environment can act as source of safety or danger; residing in an area contaminated by chemicals, geographically unsafe, or socially violent. The environment can also serve as an enabler of healthier behavior exemplified by inhalation of safety devices in motor vehicles, proximity of physical fitness devices to work place or home and exposure to interpersonal modeling or cultural practices that foster health behavior. The environment can act as provider of health resources such effective communication sanitation systems, public health services and legislation ensuring citizens access to health insurance and primary care.

## **Risk communication**

In event of a natural disaster or hazard, there are ways of ensuring that people who are affected are safe. SEM can be required in helping one analyze when information and receivers and those involved. These

conditions are environmental influences which are far reaching. The person's <https://assignbuster.com/different-social-ecological-perspectives-sociology-essay/>

level of education, understanding, and privileged circumstances may determine the kind of information the person receives and the mediums through which the information is conveyed. If the information received is altered through the mode of communication, there would be a bottom-up effect on the people involved.

In general McLeroy (1996) points out that:

The social perspectives try to, eliminate obstacles on healthy risks, generate conditions favorable for individuals well being plus all people around, creates a positive reception on how people be at vary, facilitates individuals interdependence, coexistence and interrelationships that are found among other individuals and the society as a whole, they try to show in which way; broader physical, social, political, economical, ethnical and cultural context and histories influence the ways in which individuals( and other people) make meaning out of observation and experience and it embraces the sense of care and concern for others (McLeroy 1996).

Other things that social perspectives accomplish are; they help in the recognition of competitive interests, access to resources and relationship with authority which is seen to manipulate people's abilities, societies and countries to gain stability. These perspectives also assist in the reflection of self and thinking critically that eventually ends in positive actions, encourages social justice, helps learners to counter the ever shifting world, and enables youthful people to look past their selves while working towards expectations and a future encouraging people in taking necessary actions where appropriate in order to develop better healthy practices.

## Bullying and Victimization

The idea of a multiple society influencing an entity is not a new concept. In fact much has been researched on the interplay between the individual, family, peer group, school, community and culture. This reciprocal interplay between individuals involved in the bully/victim continuum can be clearly illustrated, the social ecological perspective can be applied to the conceptualization of bullying behavior.

According to Dolls (2001), “ in a nut shell, bullying does not occur in isolation. This phenomena is encouraged/or incited as a result of complex relationship between the individual, family, peer group, school community and culture. The individual is the centre of his/her social ecology”. The individual involved ion bullying may be involved as a bully, bully victim, victim or by stander. Individual factors will influence participation in bullying. “ Ecological systems theory purports that all individuals are part of the interrelated systems that locate an individual at the centre and move out of the centre to include all the systems that affect the individual” I

Bronfenbrenner (1977). According to his theory, a child is inseparable part of social network comprising of four interrelated systems: Microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems and Microsystems.

The child is at the centre of and actively involved with this interplay of systems. The micro system involves the child’s relationship with one system; home, classroom or playground. The Microsystems depicts he the child’s immediate interaction with others, and including others reaction towards bullying behavior. This conceptualization of Microsystems also includes the

status of the child along the bully/victim continuum. Thus the bully, bully victim, victim or bystander interact with others in his or her social environment, and this interaction either exacerbates or mitigate bullying and/or victimization behavior. The mesosystem includes the interrelationship between system in the child's life; home and school. The mesosystems depicts the congruence between two or more environments such as congruence between and home and school in regard to bullying behavior. The exosystems includes influences from other context, such as the effects of a schools district anti bully policy or parental involvement in the school system.

Finally, the macro system is the influence of cultural mores, such as societal attitude towards bullying behavior. The social ecology that encompasses the daily life of youth dictates the engagement and non engagement in bullying and/or victimization behaviors. 19Simons (2000) because individual are affected by their surroundings, it logically follows that intervention the environment in which youth function. Interventions that do not follow the target multiple environments in which youth exists are likely to be fewer effectives than interventions that address social ecology.

This assertion is related to consistent findings that the youth who are involved in aggressive behavior experience problems in multiple area including the family, peer group, school, and community.

It is important to determine whether or not an intervention is effective in preventing and /or eliminating bullying behavior. Thus assessment of

bullying phenomena must utilize multiple methods of assessments, use multiple informants and include assessments across the context.

While this can be a daunting task, best practices demands that we asses all the social ecological if we are to accurately determine the effects bullying prevention and intervention programming. An example of this type of best practice is reflected in schema proposed and implemented by Simons (2000) these studies state that data should be collected across all settings (home, school, community, laboratory and others), by multiple informants, observers, children peers, parents, teachers and using multiple methods home observations, lab tasks, classroom, playground questionnaires, records among others.

## Conclusion

We can conclude that a better social perspective can be achieved by putting into consideration of factors at all level which are; interpersonal, organizational, public and individual. Behavior modification entails individuals change on how he or she views the surrounding and effective modification with a shift with ones assessment of entities. By so doing, behavior change will be implemented and sustained.