

# Example of essay on the three sociological perspectives

[Society](#)



Sociological perspectives refer to various approaches that sociologists use in studying the human society and systems. The three sociological perspectives are structural/functional, conflict and symbolic/Interactionist perspectives. Generally, these approaches provide the theoretical frameworks through which issues of human society and systems can be solved. It is through these theoretical approaches that clinical or practical sociology operates. The application of the concepts into real life situations gives the study of sociology relevant its students.

The functionalist perspective of sociology looks at the society as a complex system of parts or structures that interact harmoniously to perform different necessary functions in the society. The structural/functionist perspective is a micro-sociology approach that embraces the societal consensus of shared values, norms, beliefs and attitudes of the society. The proponents of this perspective are opposed to change as they view it as a very disruptive and gradual process. The functionalist theory views social stratification from the leadership responsibilities that the society endows on its individuals. In a society, different job opportunities attract different benefits such as power and monetary rewards. Members of the society are therefore motivated by theses benefits to work hard and acquire such positions. (Andersen and Taylor 17)

In real life, human society is a stratified institution which has various classes of people. We have the rich, the middle class and the poor. In explaining the existence of these classes, much reference is done on the functionalist approach. There are positions that exist in the society and individual struggle to fill them up. This notion therefore explains why people go to school and

acquire training and competence from various institutions. The proponents of this theory argue that the existence of these social classes is justified by the difference in human qualifications and competence. Every member of the society would serve his or her society in the field that he or she has an excellent experience. In the society, there are doctors, engineers, teachers, lawyers and those who are unskilled thus perform odd jobs. All these professional positions must be filled by people who can offer best services to make the society complete. All the components of any system must work harmoniously to achieve the final functioning of that system. This is what a society is.

The second sociological perspective is the conflict approach. This theory is advanced by the Marxist school which believes there is a constant struggle for the scarce natural resources. The Marxists explain that the individuals who own and control the means of production have to acquire the power to maintain the status quo by establishing political structures and systems that favor their interests. This contradicts the functionalists' view that these status exist on their own. The school and legal systems are set in such a way that they benefit the ruling class. In fact, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels emphasize that every generation of rulers do so from the ideas of its ruling class. For instance, the American capitalist used social Darwinism to justify their position that they are the most fit to do so having survived the evolutionary struggles of the survival of the fittest. (Tischler 188)

This conflict perspective of sociology is very relevant in studying human society and systems. With the high rate of population growth, the ratio of human beings to the natural resources is constantly widening.

In this situation the world is adopting the Darwinism theory of the survival of the fittest. The current world conflicts are mainly as a result of scramble for the scarce resources. Political unrests, workers demonstrations, domestic violence and class conflicts are true reflection of the conflict perspective of sociology. The rich and the ruling class are not willing to let go of their powers and control over the key factors of production. They would thus use whichever means possible to preserve their status quo. In doing so, they use propaganda to block their competitors from ascending to power. The end result is that the rich may continue becoming richer while the poor becomes poorer. However, in extreme cases the poor may become determined and ascend to the middle or the rich class. This is mostly achievable through education that unlocks several professional avenues for jobs. This leads to social change in which members of the society cross social class boundaries. The third perspective of sociology is the symbolic or interactionist approach. This approach argues that no member of the society is an island. Human beings are dependent on each other in many ways and thus must always have a collective responsibility in their society. Interactionists emphasize that human beings are social animal who must operate in social groups which bring their interaction. Furthermore, the creation of these social groups is negotiated through verbal and non-verbal communications. (Andersen and Taylor 18)

Interactionists' perspective approaches the study and application in a macro scale. It looks at the entire society. In real life society, there are several social welfare groups, movements and associations. These social welfares exist in the offices, work places, institutions of learning and the entire

society. Major societal problems are addressed through these organizations. Human beings feel more secure to seek solutions to their problems from a collective voice. Prominent persons such as leader, employers, financiers and advisory bodies are free and ready to listen to a group of people or rather union instead of dealing with individuals. Apart from this, the notion unity is strength has been a motivating factor and a driving power to the formation of these unions.

In conclusion, the three perspectives of sociology give very good theoretical frameworks for approaching and explaining the human real life societal systems and structures. Besides, they also provide a very good link to finding lasting solutions to the dynamic political, social and economic problems facing human beings today.

## **Works Cited**

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