

Describe how social theory helps you evaluate contemporary challenges related to ...

[Science](#), [Social Science](#)



Describe how social theory helps you evaluate contemporary challenges related to your chosen problem/policy area

Task Importance of Social Theory in Urban Development Early Theories of Urban Development and Poverty A number of policy frameworks will generate diversified notions of poverty as well as its sources. As per economists, it is a significant issue when it comes to; productivity, human capital, and the labor market. Urban ecological theory analyzes cities through a human ecology lens and views poor urban neighborhoods as functional and transitional zones of larger urban metropolises. These are places where new immigrant groups pass-through on a temporary basis (Liu, 2013). Other ecological theorists examine the disorganization in nature of cities and their adverse effects on the poor neighborhood (Wirth, 1938; Shaw & McKay, 1942). The destruction of the character of the poor neighborhoods denounces the ignorance of factors other than market forces that determine the movement of the social groups and the use of land (Sampson & Morenoff, 1997). The culture of poverty is an influential theory that suggests the norms and behaviors of the poor in distinction to a subculture of the larger society (Lewis, 1968; Moynihan, 1965).

The culture of poverty thesis is extensive by critics for being too deterministic, blaming the victimized and diverting attention away from the real causes of poverty. Another perspective blames welfare policies for the disintegration of the urban black family on the offer of disincentives for work and marriage. The stated view discounts evidence that shows welfare rates rising even when the relative advantage of work at a minimum wage job outweighs that of welfare income.

Social Isolation and Concentration Effects

Anthropologists and sociologists emphasize much on relations and social status, culture, and behavior. Moreover, political scientists base much on group power as well as access to collective resources.

Wilson (1987) maintains the two key factors that best explain the rapid deterioration of the “urban underclass”. The changes in structure and social composition of the economy are the case studies. Wilson (1996) argues that significant shifts in the structure of the American economy contribute to a downward spiral for the urban blacks. The jobs, relocate away, and the economic base shifts from manufacturing to the service sector. The jobs, then begin requisitioning formal education and credentials that many inner-city residents lack.

Residential Segregation and Discrimination

Systematic barriers are in place to limit black spatial mobility, which mostly confined blacks to disadvantaged neighborhoods. Federal housing policies contribute significantly to the disinvestment in black urban areas and the expansion of the suburbs. Locating public housing projects in poor communities further increase in the rate of poverty concentration in urban areas

Massey and Denton’s theory overstate the role of racial discrimination in causing urban poverty from critics. Suggests a recognition of how the fate of poor blacks is in connection with the structure and functioning of the modern American economy. The one thing that theorists do seem to agree on is that neighborhood matters. It is acceptable that neighborhood poverty plays a significant role in child and family outcomes.

Neighborhood Effects

The coexistence between neighbors within a particular region, do determine the lifestyle of an individual in one way or another. The theories of urban development look into the relationship between neighborhoods with effect to teen pregnancy, crime, school dropouts and unemployment (Massey et al., 1991). Most studies are unable to draw causal links between neighborhood effects and life chances (Small & Newman, 2001). There are also several methodological problems with these studies, including disagreements on inconsistencies over the definitions and measures on the disadvantages (Brown & Richman, 1997; Small & Newman, 2001). There are several critical studies suggesting the effects of neighborhood poverty on adolescent achievement, child development, parenting practices and delinquency (Peeples & Loeber, 1994).

References

Liu, C. (2013). *Advances in Hospitality*. UK: Emerald.