

TOPIC: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON STRATIFICATION

Functionalist Perspective

Functionalist Perspective

- **Davis-Moore Thesis:** Social stratification is _____ to society.
 - Jobs with more functional importance or cultural value have _____ rewards attached to them.
 - Social stratification incentivizes people to work hard and strive for important jobs.
 - A system with equal rewards would _____ incentivize hard work.

Criticisms

- Do unequal rewards truly _____ contribution to society?
- Cultural assessment of “importance” can be _____ (ex: female-dominated fields tend to have less prestige).
- Focuses only on benefits and ignores the negative social impact that social inequality can have.

EXAMPLE

Which of the following are core assumptions of the Davis-Moore thesis?

- Some jobs are more functionally important than others.
- Social stratification is beneficial to society.
- Social stratification can motivate and incentivize people to work harder.

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- a) I & II. b) I & III. c) II & III. d) I, II, & III.

PRACTICE

According to the functionalist perspective, social stratification exists in part because it:

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- Benefits the wealthy elite, who hold power and influence politics.
 - Reflects social values related to capitalist consumption.
 - Ensures that more talented/qualified individuals take on functionally important roles.
 - Has emerged though decades of class conflict between capitalists and proletarians.

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Conflict Perspective

Conflict Perspective

- The **conflict perspective** states that social stratification is _____ and does not benefit society.
- Marx saw stratification based on a person's relationship to means of production:
 - **Capitalists:** Own productive property - _____ from stratification.
 - **Proletarians:** Labor for others – disadvantaged by stratification.
- Social stratification creates and perpetuates cycles of inequality across _____.
- Support greater economic equality and reducing pay disparities across occupations.

Stratification makes class conflict inevitable.

Criticisms

- Making pay more equal means separating reward from performance - is that fair?
- _____ to reward hard work has been attributed to the failings of past socialist economies.

EXAMPLE

According to the conflict perspective, which of the following is **true** about social stratification?

- a) Social stratification is generally beneficial and makes society stable.
- b) Social stratification creates and maintains advantages for the dominant groups in a society.
- c) Social stratification reflects widely accepted societal values.
- d) Social stratification ensures fairness in how rewards are allocated.

PRACTICE

According to Marx, social stratification in capitalist societies is based primarily on:

- a) Relationship to means of production.
- b) Educational achievement.
- c) Occupational prestige.
- d) Individual talent, skill, and qualifications.

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Symbolic Interactionist Perspective

Symbolic Interactionist Perspective

- **Symbolic interactionists** focus on how social stratification affects people's thoughts and behaviors on a daily basis.
- People mainly interact with others of a _____ social standing:
 - 1 **Societal structure:** many societies have class-based _____ at the city/neighborhood level.
 - 2 **Personal choice:** many people hold _____-based prejudice.
- **Conspicuous Consumption:** Buying products because of the "statement" they make about social _____.

Criticisms

- This perspective does not address why broad patterns of inequality exist.

EXAMPLE

Select the 3 scenarios that are the **best** examples of conspicuous consumption.

1	An upper-middle class college student purchases a luxury handbag that she shows off to her peers.	
2	A homeowner installs an elaborate outdoor patio and grill station to impress his neighbors during cookouts.	
3	A man purchases durable boots because they are long-lasting and high quality.	
4	A couple purchases a fuel-efficient used car.	
5	A social media influencer vlogs about designer clothing hauls and vacations to luxury resorts.	

PRACTICE

Neighborhoods being separated by social class indirectly reinforces stratification by:

- Increasing social mobility.
- Limiting interactions between social classes.
- Reducing competition between social classes.
- Reducing educational inequality.

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Review

	Functionalist Perspective (Davis-Moore Thesis)	Conflict Perspective	Symbolic Interactionist Perspective
Main Idea	Social stratification is beneficial and represents the unequal _____ of different types of work.	Social stratification harmful to most people in society, and this is _____ on the part of the capitalist class.	Social stratification has _____ effects on the daily lives, behaviors, and thoughts of people.
Is Stratification Fair?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ _____. ▸ Linking more rewards to important work is widely socially accepted. ▸ Some degree of inequality can boost economic production and motivate people to work harder. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ _____. ▸ Creates a divide in society between social classes ▸ There is widespread opposition to social inequality – many people perceive it as unfair. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ It _____. ▸ People may or may not perceive stratification to be fair, which can influence their thoughts and behaviors.

EXAMPLE

Match each of the following researchers to a theoretical perspective:

Researcher A	Studies how income inequality can reinforce unequal access to resources and social power.	
Researcher B	Studies how income-based segregation at the neighborhood level helps maintain social order by grouping similar people together.	
Researcher C	Studies how social class shapes peoples' identities and everyday social interactions.	

- a) Functionalist Perspective
- b) Conflict Perspective
- c) Symbolic Interactionist Perspective