

SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND CULTURE

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THE SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF SOCIAL PROBLEM

Here we will list and explain the sociological perspectives on social problem, they include:

- Conflict Perspective
- Symbolic interactionism Perspective
- Functionalist Perspective
- Feminist Perspective

These perspectives explain the aspects of social problems, but they do so in different ways.

To understand these different perspectives, let us use cybercrime (yahoo yahoo) as a social problem

- Conflict theory takes a very different approach to understanding cyber crime in Nigeria. It states that most criminals are poor and thus emphasize that cybercrime is the result of the hopelessness and frustration of living in poverty and facing a lack of jobs and other opportunities for economic and social success. The root of this crime, from the perspective of conflict theory, lies in the social class (poor and rich) in the society.
- The symbolic interactionism focuses on how the cybercriminals make decisions as when and where to use the internet to rob someone and on how their interactions with other criminals reinforce their own criminal tendencies.

- Functionalist approach suggests that ‘yahoo yahoo’ actually serves positive functions for the society, such as that it creates jobs- for the Police force, EFCC, SARS, Army and Military in Nigeria. Jobs are create to curb crime.
- Feminist perspective on the other hand, presents “yahoo yahoo” as a problem that affects the females such that the criminals make females their victims for diabolical rituals which somewhat results to the killing of females for the purpose of perpetrating the crime.

Conflict Perspective

- Conflict theory is traced to **Karl Marx** (1818–1883) and his associate, **Friedrich Engels** (1820–1895).
- Conflict paradigm sees the society divided by inequality and conflict.
- Conflict perspective claims that social problems arise because the society is divided into two social classes namely: bourgeoisie and proletariat.
- The bourgeoisie, known as the ruling class, owns the means of production.
- The proletariat, also known as the working class, does not own the means of production and instead is oppressed and exploited by the bourgeoisie.
- Thus, social problems are a result of the uneven outcome of competition among various interest groups for limited resources.

Symbolic interactionism Perspective

- Symbolic interactionism focuses on the interaction and view of individuals and on how they interpret their interaction in the society.
- This perspective was developed from thoughts of **George Herbert Mead** (1863-1931) and was later modified by **Herbert Blumer** (1900-1987).
- Symbolic interactionism views social problems as arising from the interaction of individuals, people learn of a social problem from their interaction with other people.
- Symbolic interactionism perspective emphasizes on the subjective nature of social problems.
- For example, a man see violence against woman as the only way a man exercise his superiority in his relation with a woman. Another example is that people see cyber crime as a means of getting rich and staying wealthy without hard work or/and initiatives.

Functionalist Perspective

- **Herbert Spencer** (1820-1903), **Emile Durkheim** (1858–1917), **Talcott Parson** (1902-1979) and **Robert Merton** (1910-2003) were the sociologists who contributed in propounding and the use of functionalist theory.
- Functionalist perspective emphasizes on how different parts of the society work together to maintain social order and solidarity in the society.
- Functionalism further emphasizes the role of social institutions such as the family, political, economic, religion, and education for a cohesive society.
- Functionalist states that social problems are functional in the society, because many social problems do play vital roles in our society.
- For instance, crime is a social problem, it is seen as a good factor for the socio-economic improvement because it creates jobs for agencies that deal with crime. That is to say, if there is no crime people would be out of work.

Feminist Perspective

- **Charlotte Perkins Gilman's** (1860-1935) and later **Ann Oakley's** (1944-still alive) works in sociology helped to formalize feminist theory.
- Feminist theory emphasizes that the society is filled with gender inequality such that women are vulnerable in the society.
- For instance, feminists believe that crises are instigated by men but women, girls and children bear the negative consequences more than men, such as women are found vulnerable in times of war, robbery, rape etc.

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ANY QUESTIONS



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