

# Essay Walk Through

How to Write an AICE Sociology Paper

# Look at the Prompt

**‘All members of society benefit from the existence of social order.’ Explain and assess this view.**

1. As I look at the prompt I want to understand what it is asking me.
2. Then I want to take a look at terms that may need to be defined.
  1. Members of society: People who identify and are recognized as members.
    1. What about marginalized people in society?
  2. Social Order: Structures and rituals that shape everyday life.



You can usually tell the direction that the prompt wants you to go. By asking a question about social order, the prompt is looking for you to make a structuralist argument. That means Functionalism and Conflict—maybe Phenomenology. Interactionism and Postmodernism is, perhaps, not the best way to go. It's not impossible, but it would certainly be more difficult. It's a good idea to ask yourself **“where does the prompt want me to go?”**

Doing this can also keep you from chasing after you know who!



Don't listen to him. Chase me! Chase me! You know you want to!

# Look at the Prompt

**‘All members of society benefit from the existence of social order.’ Explain and assess this view.**

1. As I look at the prompt I want to understand what it is asking me.
2. Then I want to take a look at terms that may need to be defined.
3. Decide on sociological theories that you think will help you answer the question.
  1. Durkheim: Value Consensus
  2. Marx: Dialectical Materialism
  3. Dubois: Cultural Dominance

These theories address social order. Where social order comes from and its consequences on society’s members. I’m also kinda batting around Weber, but I’m not sure where to go with that and I only have an hour to get this done



Pfft!

# Use your magic box

Turn your prompt into a question.

Does social order benefit ALL members of society?

<p>Durkheim/Value Consensus:</p> <p>Societies develop a value consensus. Make society stable.</p> <p>Solidarity: Forces that hold society together.</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Marx/Dialectical Materialism:</p> <p>Societies benefit some at the expense of most.</p> <p>Capitalist/Proletariat</p> <p>False Consciousness</p> <p>No</p>
<p>Alternative to Social Order = Social Disorder/Anomie</p> <p>No stability. No Solidarity. Needs not met</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>No</p> <p>Dubois/Cultural Oppression:</p> <p>Dominant groups structure society so that oppressed groups lose their history, their representations and must develop a dual consciousness</p>

Develop your thesis

All members benefit from social order, but some members benefit more than others

# The Introduction Paragraph

Social order is something that we all take for granted. Social order is the structures that are in place that make life predictable and allow institutions in society to meet the needs of its members.

Certainly, social order is better than social disorder. On the surface, this seems to indicate that social order benefits ALL members of society. But does it. This is an ongoing debate between functionalist sociologists who see society as consisting of functional structures that tend to make society stable, and conflict theorists who see society as composed of groups in perpetual conflict for status and resources. If we look at any given society, we see some who benefit while others are marginalized and/or exploited. The argument between functionalists and conflict theorists indicate that all members may benefit from social order as opposed to disorder, but some members benefit more than others.

Your Body!

Functionalist sociologist Emile Durkheim sees social order as providing solidarity. Pre-Industrial societies did this by developing a consensus on traditions and values. Industrial societies have greater social gravity, but maintain social order through a division of labor and an understanding on mutual dependence. For Durkheim, the alternative to social order is anomie. Anomie is a state of normlessness. Anomic societies are distinguished by high rates instability, illness, suicide and crime. Any advanced capitalist society is a good example of societies with an established social order. Certainly, individuals who live in such societies are much better off than those living in societies marked by high levels of anomie.

Functionalists like Durkheim do a great job of elaborating and explaining the social order. They do not, however, have an adequate answer to inequality in society. Sure, there's the Davis/Moore Thesis that posits that inequality is functional because it provides the incentive for people to better themselves. This is inadequate, however, when one thinks about the obstacles faced by the poor, disempowered and marginalized members of society. Recent research shows that there mere incentive to succeed, in many cases, do not compensate for the damage done by and the loss of opportunities based on social class, race and even gender based marginalization. So can it be said that the social order benefits ALL members when so many are left out. ?

Conflict theorists offer that all members do not benefit from social order. According to conflict theorists, the social order is structured by those in power. These structures are created for the purpose of maintaining dominance over others. For conflict theorists, just because a society is "orderly" does not mean it's just and it does not mean that everyone benefits. Marx pointed out that in any given society we see those who have access to material resources are able to use that access to exploit the labor of those who do not. This is called dialectical materialism. In modern societies, capitalists, or those who hold wealth that can be used to generate more wealth, are able to use that capital to extract value from laborers who must work for less than the value of their labor to produce surplus value that benefits capitalists. That such a society is orderly, for Marx, only indicates that the proletariat, or working class, is deceived with a false consciousness.

W. E. B. Dubois furthers this conflict analysis by demonstrating how the very culture of societies privileges the dominant group at the expense of the marginalized, in this case African Americans under and apartheid system of Jim Crow. Dominant groups write the histories of the marginalized and they control how the dispossessed are represented in the greater society. We see examples of this in history textbooks that under-represent minority groups and cultural expressions like television shows that use stereotypes to tell social stories. According to Dubois, minority groups under such cultural conditions must develop a dual consciousness in which they see themselves in terms of their own subjectivity, but also in terms of the prejudice and discrimination they face in society. Can it be said that such members of the society benefit from this social order?

Wrap it up! What's your point

Conflict theorists like Marx and Dubois raise some good points about inequality and the value of social order to all members of society. After all, the membership of any given society includes people in different social classes, with different levels of status and different claims to benefits. Still, if given a choice between living in orderly societies or anomic societies as defined by Durkheim, it can be argued that even those who are at the bottom of an orderly society benefit in ways that are not available to those living in anomic or disorderly societies. We are currently undergoing a wave of refugees fleeing societies that have been destroyed by war, economic recession and environmental degradation. They are seeking asylum in orderly societies. A synthesis of functionalist and conflict theorists might be the best way to describe social order that may benefit all members, but certainly benefits some more than others.