



Theoretical Perspectives – GENDERED TOY ADVERTISING

FUNCTIONALISM

1. **General statement:** Society is made up of social structures and social relations that function together for the good of the whole society. The need for social cohesion is the driving force of society.
2. **Sociologists** seek to understand the roots of social stability and consensus (how society agrees on values and norms).
3. **Social change** occurs through evolution, as institutions gradually shift to reflect new norms and values.
4. Members of a society should be **socialized** to accept shared norms and values because they encourage cohesion.
5. Although some people may have greater **social status** or wealth than others, we are all rewarded fairly for our contributions to society.

Applying FUNCTIONALISM: Gendered Toy Advertising

- **Question:** How do gender roles keep society functioning smoothly?
- **Point of Interest:** Prepares us to assume gendered roles that are necessary for the functioning of society. E.g., women must be able to care for children; men must be powerful, providers.

CONFLICT THEORY

1. **General statement:** Society is characterized by conflict between different groups competing for their interests. The economy is the driving force of society.
2. **Sociologists** examine who benefits from the unequal relations of society.
3. Because society is unequal, children from working-class families do not have access to the same **socialization** experiences as those from middle and upper-class backgrounds.
4. **Social change** occurs through revolution, as a result of marginalized people fighting for social justice.
5. Privileged members of society seek to maintain power, wealth and **social status** through the oppression of others. Those in power use social institutions to make sure they stay in power.

Applying CONFLICT THEORY: Gendered Toy Advertising

- **Question:** What do these toys tell us about how power and wealth are distributed in society? How do these toys normalize inequality?
- **Point of Interest:** Socializes us to accept unequal gender relations that privilege men and marginalize women. We are socialized into different types of work (domestic/ paid) to maintain inequality and these different types of work are valued differently.

FEMINISM

1. **General statement:** Society is characterized by inequalities based on gender and other social categories. Social institutions privilege men's interests and marginalize women.
2. **Sociologists** have much to learn from the experiences of women and other marginalized groups.
3. We are **socialized** to accept gender roles that dictate what is "normal" for a man or woman.
4. Individuals cannot be understood on the basis of a single **social status**; different social categories intersect to shape our experiences.
5. **Social change** should focus on challenging social inequality. But challenges to gender inequality needs to address all forms of social inequalities.

Applying Feminism: Gendered Toy Advertising

- **Question:** How do these toys privilege men and marginalize women? How can toys help challenge sexism?
- **Point of Interest:** Toy commercials socialize us to accept unequal gender roles. We could challenge this form of sexism by designing toys that empower both girls and boys.

SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM

1. **General statement:** Social order is based on how well we learn to develop our identities through our interactions with others.
2. **Socialization** is emphasized as the process through which we develop a sense of self through our interactions with others—how we develop a sense of self through other's eyes.
3. **Sociologists** can learn a great deal by exploring face-to-face interactions.
4. **Social change** occurs when the meanings of the labels and symbols that shape our interactions change.
5. Our everyday encounters with others shape and reinforce our assumptions about **social status**.

Applying SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONSIM: Gendered Toy Advertising

- **Question:** How do these toys teach us to interact with each other? What do these toys teach us about how to express our masculinity and femininity to others?
- **Point of Interest:** We learn expected gender behaviours through our interactions with others. These commercials show what's considered normal kinds of social interactions for girls and boys.