



Structural Functionalism

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STRUCTURAL FUNCTIONALISM

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Definition of Key Terms

- Structuralism.
- Social cohesion
- Equilibrium
- Social Inequality
- Interdependence.
- Neo-functionalism.
- Structural Functionalism

DEFINITION of Structural Functionalism

- Paraphrased as Functionalism
- Functionalism doctrine is used in Anthropology, Sociology, Philosophy , Psychology and in Philosophy of Psychology
- It is a sociological theory that attempts to explain why society functions the way it does by focussing on relationships between various social institutions that make up society.(Government, Judiciary, Religion)

Key Ideas:

- Social systems are collective means to fulfill social needs in order for social life to survive and develop in society.
- Society is made up of groups or institutions which are cohesive, share common norms and have a definite culture (Robert K. Durkheim)

Features of Structural Functionalism as:

1. Classical Theory

2. Consensus Theory

- opposite of the Conflict Theory.

3. Systems Theory

- Societies and Social units are systems

4. Macro-level Theory

-(large-scale or grand-scale) focus of society in contrast to Micro theories that focus on individuals in society

Structural Functionalism-Systems Theory

1. Systems have a property of order and interdependent parts.
2. Systems tend towards self-maintaining order or equilibrium.
3. The system may be static or involved in an ordered process of change.
4. The nature of one part of the system has an impact on the form that other parts take.
5. Systems maintain boundaries within their environments.

Structural Functionalist as a Systems Theory. contd

6. Allocation and integration are two fundamental processes necessary for a given state of equilibrium within a system
7. Systems tend towards self-maintenance involving control of boundaries and relationships of parts to the whole , control of the environment and control of tendencies to change the system from within

KEY ASSUMPTIONS IN STRUCTURAL FUNCTIONALIST THEORY(Arise from Systems Theory)

- Societies and social units have order and interdependent parts like a biological organism held together by cooperation and orderliness.
- Societies and social units work toward the natural or smooth working of the system, ie towards equilibrium
- Societies and social units, just as natural(external) environments, are separate or distinct but adapt to each other-if one or more parts conflict with others, others must adapt.

PROPONENTS(Prominent Theorists)

- Auguste Comte
- Herbert Spencer
- Talcott Parsons
- Robert Merton
- Gabriel Almond and Bingham Powell
- Kingsley Davis and Wilbert E. Moore
(Davis-Moore Hypothesis)

Other Influential Theorists

- Emile Durkheim
- David Keen
- Niklas Luhmann
- Bronislaw Malinowski
- George Murdock
- Alfred Reginald Radcliffe-Brown
- Fei Xiaotong

CRITISMS

- In the 1960s, functionalism was criticized for being unable to account for social change, or for structural contradictions and conflict.
- it ignores inequalities including race, gender, class, which causes tension and conflict.

APPLICATIONS(Structural Functionalist Views)

- EDUCATION
- CRIME
- SPORTS

CONCLUSION

- Structural Functionalism, or simply Functionalism, is a theoretical perspective in sociology and anthropology which views and interprets society as a structure with interrelated functional parts. Functionalism views society as a whole in terms of functions of its constituent elements. This is a macro-level view

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