

Essay on origin and development of the functionalist perspective

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In this paperwork, I will totally put in plain words the origin and development of the Functionalist perspective- talking about the ideas of Durkheim and Merton as they specifically contribute to the concept. I will, also, discuss the social control mechanisms indicated by the Functionalist Perspective. It is important to note that functionalist perspective, well-known as functionalism, acknowledges that all features of the social order are mutually dependent and contributes to the social orders working as a whole. According to a literature review, it is depicted that functionalism perspective is recognized as one of the key hypothetical perspectives in the meadow of sociology. A functionalist perspective is depicted to have its origins in the works of Emile Durkheim. Emile Durkheim was interested in studying how social order is possible, hence creating up a relatively stable society (Durkheim, 1964). To be clear on the origin and development of functionalism perspective, according to a literature review, it is depicted that functionalism perspective evolved slowly over time through the help of sociologists across the world, but the most significant initiators of this theory are Emile Durkheim and Radcliffe-Brown. Literature review has it that in the late 19th century, Emile Durkheim, who was a French Sociologist laid down the most important fundamentals of functionalism perspective. Emile Durkheim wanted to fulfill his curiosity about the four major characteristics of the social order: how societies can into existence and what maintains their stability, role played by religion, suicide, and transgression and deviance. His curiosity to study the four major characteristics of the social order motivated him to coin the term functionalism (Anderson, 2009).

It is depicted that the functionalist perspective came into popularity among

the American sociologists in the 1940s. It is important to note that the American functionalists focused on finding out the functions of individual etiquette. Robert Merton, an American functionalist, divided human functions in two forms; that is manifest functions and latent functions. Manifest functions, according to Robert Merton, depict the obvious and planned behaviors whereas the latent functions depict the not obvious and unplanned behaviors. For example, we expect a religious person to go to church with the objective of worshipping, according to manifest functions, but it would be a latent function if the same person attended a religious service with the intent of conducting commerce (Anderson, 2009). According to a literature review, it is depicted the manifest functions has been accepted by the majority of functionalists, but latent functions demands a sociological approach so as to be revealed to the rest of the functionalists who have not yet recognized its presence. It is important to note that a sociological approach, according to functionalism, is the aptitude of being able to consider the bond between the functions of minor parts and the functions of the whole. Robert Merton goes ahead to argue that functionalism is about the more tangible features of the social order, such as the government and religious institutions. It is depicted that the government relies on the success of students, hence it have an obligation to fulfill, so as to achieve its objective-providing education through the public school scheme. The parents, too, are not left behind by this system- public school scheme. The students grow to be responsible adults who are willing to pay their taxes, thereby, keeping the government functioning- according to functionalist theory. The parents, the government, and the students, all, rely on each

other (Three Major Perspectives in Sociology. 22 Jun 2011).

According to functionalists, they accept as true that the society is held as a group by cohesion, or social consensus, whereby; every member of the society must come into terms by working together, so as to achieve what is paramount for the social order as a whole. Social consensus takes one of two forms, according to Emile Durkheim, that is mechanical solidarity and organic solidarity. It is depicted that mechanical solidarity mainly happens in uncomplicated societies, such as those in which everybody herds domestic animals. It is defined as a form of social unity that arises when the society uphold similar principles and way of life - mechanical solidarity. In disparity, Organic solidarity is depicted as a form of social unity that arises when the society is co-dependent. Organic solidarity, therefore, happens in complex societies, such as those in developed world. It is, therefore, important to note that a functionalism perspective plays a vital role in interpreting every component of the society in stipulations of how it adds to the firmness of the entire social order. In case on part of the system is dysfunctional, then it will result to social change, since it affects the entire components, thereby, creating social problems (Three Major Perspectives in Sociology. 22 Jun 2011).

Literature review has it that every part of a society is mutually dependent and contributes to the operation of the social order as a complete entity. In order to have a stable and a productive society, then all the people living in that society must understand, thoroughly, how every section functions within the social order- according to functionalism perspective. It is, therefore, significant for a functionalist society undergoing difficulties to

quickly adapt, so as to regain its stability, order, and productivity before the situation gets out of control.

Literature review has it that functionalism faces criticism. It is depicted that some critics argue that functionalism perspective justifies the status quo and satisfaction on the part of society's members and also that it has failed to bring about the negative consequences of significant events such as divorce. Other critics claim that functionalism perspective limits or does not allow the members of the society to implement energetic role in altering their collective environment, even when those measures, implementing energetic roles, would end up benefiting the society. According to my stand, the functionalism theory has played a vital role in maintaining a stable society, since the society is held as a group by cohesion, or social consensus, whereby; every member of the society must come into terms by working together, so as to achieve what is paramount for the social order as a whole (Anderson, 2009).

Works cited

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