

Parsons' may also
come from inside the



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Parsons' Theory of Social Change: Parsons considers change "not as something that disturbs the social equilibrium, but as something that alters the state of the equilibrium so that a qualitatively new equilibrium results". He has stated that changes may arise from two sources. They may come from outside the society, through contact with other societies. They may also come from inside the society, through adjustments that must be made to resolve strains within the system. Parsons speak of two processes that are at work in social change.

In simple societies, institutions are undifferentiated, that is, a single institution serves many functions. The family for example, performs reproductive, educational, socialising, economic, recreational and other functions. A process of differentiation takes place when the society becomes more and more complex. Different institutions such as school, factory, etc.

, may take over some of the functions of the family. The new institutions must be linked together in a proper way by the process of integration. New norms, for example, must be established in order to govern the relationship between the school and the home. Further, "bridging institutions", such as law courts must resolve conflicts between other components in the system.

Evaluation: The equilibrium theory is an ambitious attempt to explain both social statics and social dynamics. Still, greater stress is laid on the former. Parsons, as an advocate of this theory, concentrated more on institutional changes. Other functionalists such as R.

K. Merton and others tried to overcome this limitation. Merton writes, "The strain, tension, contradiction and discrepancy between the component parts

of social structure" may lead to changes. Thus, in order to accommodate the concept of change within the functional model, he has borrowed concepts from conflict theories of change.