

THE RELEVANCE OF STRUCTURAL FUNCTIONALISM IN THE CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE NIGERIAN STATE

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Abstract

Structural functionalism provides a holistic perspective on society, viewing it as a system of interrelated parts with a dominant tendency towards stability maintained through mechanisms of adjustment. Gabriel A. Almond further developed this framework, particularly applying it to the politics of Third World Countries where Traditional categories were often inadequate. This conceptual paper first reviews the development and major tenets of structural functionalism and then assesses its relevance as an analytical tool for understanding Nigeria's political system. The study employs a qualitative research method, including a comprehensive literature review and thematic analysis of primary (such as observations, survey) and secondary (manuscripts, articles books, and journals) related to Nigerian political structures and challenges were used. The findings suggest that structural functionalism is useful for explaining Nigeria's political system, as it highlights the necessity for each component to perform its functions effectively for the overall stability and improvement of the political and economic system. It underscores the importance of efficient operation and interdependence among system structures, sub-structures, and superstructures for societal benefit. However, the theory has been critiqued for not adequately considering historical and cultural contexts. Nigeria's diverse ethnic composition, colonial history, and post-colonial challenges shape it's political and social structure in ways that structural functionalism may not fully address. Additionally, as a theory rooted in Western contexts, structural functionalism may impose notions of political order and stability that do not align with the realities of non-Western societies like Nigeria. To enhance the relevance of structural functionalism in Nigeria, it is crucial to integrate historical and cultural factors while prioritizing local perspectives in research. Policymaking should reflect diverse voices, promoting interdependence among political structures and fostering civic education for better public engagement.

Keywords: *Structural Functionalism, Nigerian Political System, Political Stability*

Introduction

Structural-functionalism is an early form of systems thinking that emerged out of the works of French and British sociological philosophers Comte, Spencer and Durkheim who explored and developed the application of the biological metaphor to understand society. Their works were particularly focused on explaining order and stability of so systems, emphasizing concepts of systemic needs, interdependency and socialization.

A functionalist looks at society holistically as system of interrelated parts, assuming that, the social systems have a dominant tendency towards stability maintained through built-in mechanism of

adjustment. Deviations and tensions exist but they tend to resolve themselves. Irreconcilable antagonistic contradictions in a capitalist society are ruled out' by the functionalists. Change, according to the functionalists, is gradual and adjustive, not sudden or revolutionary.

Gabriel A. Almond elaborated a theoretical framework (functional theory) for making a comparative study of politics. He was especially intrigued with the politics of the third world countries, where the categories of reference developed for the political systems of highly differentiated and complex societies, were not found relevant.

It is against this background, the paper intends to discuss the relevance of structural functionalism in contemporary Nigerian political analysis. The paper is structured to achieve the following objectives: firstly to highlight the brief history of the development of structural functionalism, secondly to explain Nigerian Political System using Structural functionalist theory, thirdly to outline the major tenets of structural functionalism, and provide rigor understanding of the relevance of structural functionalism as a tool of analysis followed by Criticisms of the Structural functionalism and recommendations.

Emergence of the Structural Functionalism

Structural functionalism spans beyond the social sciences and has a relative long history. As it can be traced, structural functionalism was found as part of the work of Charles Darwin in biological sciences though he did not specify his framework of analysis as such (Cristoper, D, 2009). The specifications of the function and relevance of the structural position of the parts to the survival of the whole, simply indicates structural functionalism in principle as a tool of analysis.

According to Fisher (2010) functionalism's history goes back to Aristotle's study of ultimate causes in nature or of actions in relation to their ends, or utility. By the 17th-century, Baron de Montesquieu has adopted the principle of structural functionalism to explain the doctrine of separation of powers in governance based on the notion of functions for the certainty of stability and security.

Potts, Vella, Allan and Neil (2014) and Urry (2000) maintain that structural-functionalism is an early form of systems thinking that emerged in the 1800s out of the works of French and British sociological philosophers like Comte, Spencer and Durkheim who explored and developed the application of the biological metaphor to understand society. According to the emphasis of their work, order and stability of social systems, are dependent on the concepts of systemic needs, interdependency and socialization (Harper, 2011). However, in the early 1900s, British anthropologists Radcliffe-Brown (1935) and Malinowski (1922) further developed and applied the sociological construct of structural-functionalism in anthropology as a means of framing ethnography and overcoming the limitations of diachronic approaches to understanding change. Many other scholars in Sociology such as Robert Merton, Talcott Parsons and others have applied the theory in the analysis and explanation of the existence of the society and its components.

Structural Functionalism

The foundation of the structural functional model is rooted in the works of Gabriel Almond and G.B. Powell. They described the political system as that system of interactions to be found in all independent societies, which perform the functions of integration and adaptation, both internally and externally vis-a-vis other societies, by means of the employment of, or threat of employment, of more or less legitimate physical compulsion. Almond and Powell, in E. Asirvatham, (2006: 27).

While underscoring the importance of comparative politics, Almond posited that "comparison is the only way we can understand our own political system". (G.A. Almond, et al. 2004: 45). He

approached comparison of political systems with a structural-functional framework. System, according to him, are objects having moving parts, interacting within a setting or environment. The various structural parts of a political system are also interdependent. As such, the structural-functional differences and interdependence determine the exchange process between politics, its environment, and the importance of this process for such goals as welfare..., peace and prosperity. Furthermore, he posited that in the developed countries, the processes of government are "elaborately differentiated, discrete and easy to identify," but in simpler societies, the same processes are rarely differentiated and discrete".

Almond seems to be believing sincerely that he has succeeded in elaborating such a theory and that it would "ultimately make possible statistical and perhaps mathematical formulation". Almond's political science, field is comparative politics. He believes that the modern Western polity as found in the United States or the United Kingdom could be taken as a norm towards which all the developing polities seem to be moving, and he thinks that he can classify all the political systems in existence in accordance with the place which they occupy in the hierarchy from the traditional through the transitional to the modern. The assumption, of course, is that 'modern' systems are more efficient in coping with the political problems in a 'state' than the traditional ones. (Varma, 1994)

As one goes through Almond's analysis of the process of change and development from a lower type to a higher and a more evolved type, one is struck with the fact that he has not been able to get over the biological trappings of the systems theory, and that he is thinking of the system as a 'living thing'. Almond's political system like that of Easton's belongs to a class of social system, with distinct characteristic of its own, but in the study of which concepts and principles of other disciplines in general and other social sciences in particular can be highly useful. (Varma, 1994)

Claiming to be a behaviouralist. Almond must loudly proclaim that he is interested more in processes than in institutions, and would, therefore, like to approach an understanding of the structures within the political system through their functions. Each political system, according to Almond, has to perform certain functions. In fact, it is on the basis of the efficiency with which a political system performs the functions assigned to it as a political system that its stature in the scale of political development is determined. Functions being given, the question that a political scientist may ask is: through which mechanisms are these functions being performed? In other words, one searches for structures by asking questions about functions. Almond has discussed at length a large number of functional categories, which a political system has to perform. (Varma, 1994)

In structural functionalism the structures of the political system (such as political parties, interest groups, legislatures, executives, bureaucracies and courts) are not clearly defined and properly patterned and yet in spite of this their importance is immense. In the opinion of Stephen Wasby, "In structural-functional analysis, one determines the important structures and then attempts to trace out the functions of these structures". In every political system there are certain structures and these cannot be confused with each other. So far as the functions are concerned there is certain amount of overlapping among the function of the structures. But this overlapping should not be over-emphasized. (Varma, 1994)

Gabriel A. Almond elaborated a theoretical framework (functional theory) for making a comparative study of politics. He was especially intrigued with the politics of the third world countries, where the categories of reference developed for the political systems of highly differentiated and complex societies, were not found relevant. Following the thinking processes of Parsons and other functionalists, Almond defines the political system as "that system of

interactions to be found in all independent societies which performs the functions of integration and adaptation (both internally and vis-a-vis other societies) by means of the employment, or threat of employment, of more or less legitimate physical compulsion. The political system is the legitimate order maintaining or transforming system in the society. (Almond and Coleman, 1960). Almond suggests four common characteristics of all political systems:

- a. All political systems have political structure,
- b. The same functions are performed in all political systems with different frequencies and by different kinds of structures,
- c. All political structures are multi-functional, and
- d. All political structures are "mixed" systems in the cultural sense

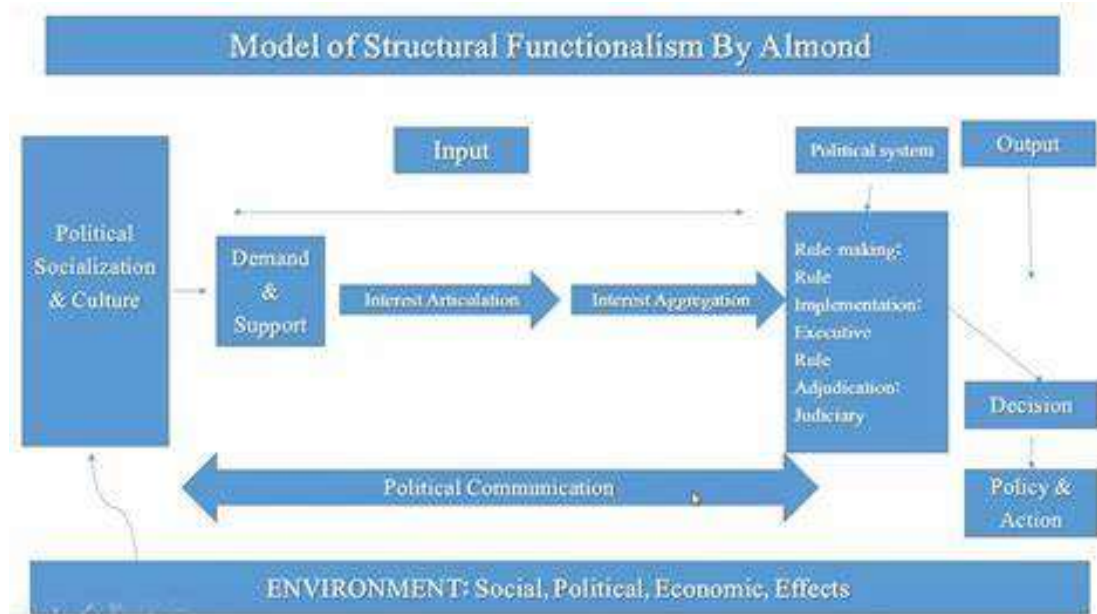


Figure 1: Political System Functions, based on Almond's Structural-Functional Analysis

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Adopted from Michael P (2019).

As indicated on the above structure, Almond has used a "seven-variable" list of functional categories. Four of these are input functions: (1) political socialization and recruitment, (2) interest-articulation, (3) interest aggregation, and (4) political communication; and the remaining three are output functions: (5) rule-making, (6) rule-application, and (7) rule-adjudication. The input functions are performed by non-governmental sub-systems, by the society and the general environment, while the output functions are governmental ones. The latter are of the traditional type -legislative, executive and judicial and are not given any great attention by Almond. It is the input functions which are regarded as highly significant. A political system, for Almond as for other systems theorists, an open system, and is being constantly influenced by the environments, social, cultural and economic under which it is working. In conformity with his broad approach to political science, Almond has included among the inputs a wide variety of factors influencing the environment. Under political socialization, Almond has included what he calls "the psychological dimension of the political system", namely, political culture, which includes values also. The

model, clearly, is more from the highly developed political systems in the western societies, where all these functions are performed in a fairly systematic and recognizable manner; Almond, however, has not taken the view that the western political system has reached perfection in all respects. All systems, as he has clearly pointed out, are culturally 'mixed', which means that they have characteristics of both modernity and traditionalism. What distinguishes the Western, the more highly developed, political systems from the others is that they have more of 'specialized structures' for interest-articulation (interest groups), interest-aggregation (political parties), and political communication (the mass media) in relation to developing countries where the structures are not so highly specialized.

Nigerian Political System and Structural functionalist theory

Politics has been identified as the bane of underdevelopment in Africa. Africa is a continent of over a billion people, yet the questions of underdevelopment, mal-governance, and a form of political life based upon patronage are characteristic of many African states, including Nigeria the giant of West African region (Tailor 2018, 32).

Nigeria as a country is situated in West Africa. With a population of over 211 million people, easily recognized as the most populous nation in Africa. With a geographically land mass of 923,769 square kilometers and is situated between the Sahel to the north and the Gulf of Guinea to the south in the Atlantic Ocean. Nigeria borders Niger in the north, Chad in the northeast, Cameroon in the east, and Benin in the west. Nigeria is a federal republic comprising 36 States and the Federal Capital Territory, where the capital, Abuja, is located. The largest city in Nigeria is Lagos, one of the largest metropolitan areas in the world and the second-largest in Africa (Blench 2014). Ajayi, Kirk-Green et al (2022) describes Nigeria as heterogeneous nation with diverse people with hundreds of cultures and languages, including Hausa, Yoruba, Ibo, Ijaw, Edo, Ibibio, Tiv, Fulani, and et-citra. Nigeria is rich in natural resources, notably for large deposit of gas, minerals and grade oil. However, the failure of governance in Nigeria political system manifests in the declining capacity of leadership to recognize the impact of the led, generating into systemic risks such as election fraud, terrorist attacks, herder farmer conflict, armed banditry, and police brutality. Odinga (1992, 138) notes that Nigeria political system is lance with leadership crisis, ethnic challenges, intro-national agitations, zonal diversity and party squabbles. Sub-lining the previous statement Nigeria political system is also attained through bribery, intimidation, electoral violence and vote buying. Many Scholars such as Davies, 2005, Walecki 2006, Saliu 2005, Fredric 2005, Ojo 2006 affirms that money politics and vote buying are the reasons for poor leadership choice of Nigerian. The problem with this situation is that the electoral process is often compromised resulting in elections not being free and fair. Thus, producing leaders who cares little or nothing for the followers. Structurally, for a political system to be functional in any society, there must be a culture of participation from the followers, not simply on elections and democratic processes alone or holding political office-holders to account as the proceduralist are. But for sense of free speech, impactful input and unrestricted communication demands that the citizens embrace a certain culture or set of attitudes that fires the spirit of inquiry or curiosity in the consciousness of the citizens. It is important to note that those who embrace this thought processes are the ones that will be ready to accept the epistemic culture needed for a change of attitude to a life of curiosity. In other words, those that accept this epistemic habit of change as the preceding discussion asserts, are those that are willing to challenge prevailing opinions and ready to accommodate others.

Structural functionalism acknowledges the multiplicity and diversity of perspectives in a plural society where matters are deliberated through unfettered communication in a democratic arena

where cooperative undertaking is the foundation. So, when in a country like Nigeria the citizens are clamouring for restructuring of the state and some calling for referendum to determine the way forward in a society where the resources and opportunities are skewed towards a particular ethnic group and the government is saying something otherwise, then the government is saying she has monopoly of knowledge/wisdom. According to Ojerinde (2011, 12), if the government is unwilling to accept the views of her citizens on the policy options and direction of their society and she is offended by the contributions of her people, then there cannot be progress. Structural functionalism demands a dialogic situation between leadership and followership, any government or individual that determines the aspirations, and needs/welfare of her citizens without talking to them does not have regards for the people. To assume that the needs of different communities are the same is to insult their collective will of the Nigeria people. Okoh and Awara (2021) asserts that when the views of the people are restricted in this way, as it is done in many dictatorial states in Africa, those who do not share the same aspiration with the government in power are left out in the scheme of things. In this situation, it is easy for the people to challenge those in leadership position at the slightest provocation. Hence, the Biafra agitation, the Niger Delta declaration and many more.

The Major Tenets of Structural Functionalism

Structural-functionalism conceptualizes society as a system of interacting parts that promote stability or transformation through their interactions. This conceptual approach suggests that, to understand social systems, we must look at the parts of the system that substantiate particular activities and their interrelations (Chilcott, 1998). Hence, some of the overarching core (and most useful) tenets underpinning structural functionalism within the context of political science by Almond, include the following:

1. There are simple and complex political systems in different parts of the globe. The industrialised matured societies of the West have complex political structures whereas the developing countries of the Third World have simple structures. Almond's point is that all the political systems have political structures. Even the simplest political systems have political structures which may be compared with the developed structures of the West. Almond has admitted that the comparison between two types of structures may not be completely relevant but they can be compared.
2. There may be differences between the systems and structures but all the systems perform almost same political functions. For the purpose of comparative analysis the frequency of the performance can be studied.
3. The political structures may be specialised, non-specialised or may be primitive. But thorough study of the various aspects has revealed that the structures are multifunctional which means that though the functions of a particular structure have been specifically stated, in practice the structure performs other functions. For example, the chief function of the court is to adjudicate, but in practice it performs legislative functions. In the same way the legislative wing of the government has been found to act like a court of law. In liberal democracies the pressure groups participate in the legislative function. In both democratic and authoritarian systems the multifunctional character of structure is found.
4. All political systems are mixed systems in the cultural sense. The culture of any political system is the mixture of modern and traditional cultures. From the study of the cultures of various political systems Almond has found that there cannot exist any all-modern and all-primitive cultures. Even the cultures of primitive political systems are partially molded

by the developed cultures of the West. Of course there may be difference of predominance of any particular culture on the cultural aspects of another system. For example, during the British rule Indian society and culture were influenced by British culture. But at the same time the British culture and society could not keep itself away from Indian culture. However, the percentage of mixture may be different in both cases. There are also stages in the process of assimilation. These are the four main characteristics of all the political systems and by finding out the characteristics Almond has made attempt to generalise the political systems.

The Relevance of Structural Functionalism as a Tool of Analysis in the Contemporary Nigerian Political System

The theory is relevant in explaining Nigerian current political structure and systems containing its predicaments as it states that each organ/sector within a system must perform their respective functions effectively for the betterment of the general political/economic system. Performing a function in a ruptured and fractured system will be an action in futility. The system controls the function in any given society. Sustainable development can only be achieved in Nigeria, if all the ethnic nationalities, groups, states, geographical zones, local government areas, other components and subordinate units within the Nigerian federalism function in a restructured system that can usher in peace, growth and development, as restructuring is imperatively needed if the nation must grow.

Functions and duties can be performed by all and sundry when there is unity and equity, with authority and responsibility delegated to all the components and units in the federation. This directly connotes the devolution of powers to all the units with from the over centralized federalized system. When justice and equity are at play, obedience is not solicited but surfaces naturally, not forcefully orchestrated. It will overtly swallow and get rid of all agitations, clamors and insecurity, and above all, usher in development.

Therefore, all system structures, sub-structures and super-structure must perform their respective functions efficiently and effectively for the betterment of the entire society. There must be cordial and mutual relationship, interaction and interdependence of all the structures and functions for the benefit of the society. All the ill-functional structures must be restructured through restructuring via dialogue and mutual agreement. This can only be achieved through mutual dialogue via restructuring and general overhauling of the fragile, tensed and fractured system Chinnah (2019). A bad structure cannot produce good output, no matter how efficient and effective is the input. The rotten structure must get input infected to produce bad output. It is a vicious cycle (Chinnah, 2021). Structural functionalism is seen as an offshoot of system theory.

Based on the above, the following items serves as the relevance of structural functionalism as a tool of analysis

1. Federal Structure and Political Stability

Structural-Functionalism Perspective: Structural-functionalism emphasizes the importance of a federal system in managing regional diversity and maintaining stability. In Nigeria, the federal system is designed to balance power between the central government and various states, accommodating the country's ethnic and regional diversity (Ekeh, 1975). The Nigerian federal system is intended to provide a mechanism for different regions to have a voice in national governance while managing regional interests and conflicts (Akinola, 2013). By distributing

authority among the federal, state, and local governments, Nigeria aims to prevent the concentration of power and mitigate regional tensions.

2. Political Institutions and Social Order

Structural-Functionalism Perspective: Political institutions are viewed as essential components that maintain social order and stability by fulfilling specific functions within the system (Almond & Powell, 1966). Nigeria's political institutions, including the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, each play distinct roles. The executive branch implements policies, the legislative branch creates laws, and the judicial branch interprets and enforces laws (Almond & Powell, 1966). These functions collectively contribute to maintaining social order and governance. The effectiveness of these institutions in maintaining order and addressing issues such as corruption, electoral integrity, and governance quality is crucial. The structural-functionalism perspective helps to analyze how well these institutions adapt to and address challenges while striving to maintain stability (Ibeanu, 2008).

3. Social Functions and Integration

Structural-Functionalism Perspective: Social functions refer to the roles and contributions of various social institutions in maintaining societal stability (Durkheim, 1893). Integration involves aligning individuals with societal norms and values to ensure cohesion. Institutions such as the family, education, and media play significant roles in socializing individuals and integrating them into the political system. For example, educational institutions prepare individuals for participation in the political process and promote civic values (Parsons, 1951). In Nigeria, challenges such as ethnic divisions, political instability, and varying levels of educational access impact social integration. Structural-functionalism helps to assess how these institutions contribute to social cohesion and address disparities (Nnoli, 2003).

4. Equilibrium and Social Change

Structural-functionalism views social change as a gradual process of adjustment aimed at restoring equilibrium (Parsons, 1951). Nigeria's political system faces various pressures and changes, such as economic fluctuations, social movements, and political reforms. Structural-functionalism analyzes how these changes are addressed through adaptations in policies and practices to maintain stability (Onwubiko, 2012). For example, electoral reforms and anti-corruption measures are responses to challenges aimed at improving governance and maintaining political stability. The gradual nature of these changes reflects the functionalist view that stability is achieved through incremental adjustments (Merton, 1968).

5. Ethnic Diversity and Political Integration

Structural-functionalism acknowledges the role of ethnic diversity in influencing social stability and integration (Murdock, 1949). Nigeria's diverse ethnic composition presents both opportunities and challenges for political integration and stability. Structural-functionalism helps to understand how the political system accommodates and manages ethnic diversity through policies and representation (Nnoli, 2003). Policies aimed at promoting ethnic inclusion and balancing representation are examples of how the political system seeks to integrate diverse groups and maintain social cohesion (Ekeh, 1975).

Criticisms of structural-functionalism

1. The critics are of opinion that Almond borrowed the chief elements and aspects of his structural functionalism mainly from sociology and specifically from Parsons the most

- noted sociologist of the second-half of the twentieth century. The problem is the term and concepts having abundant relevance in sociology may not have the same in political science. But Almond's structural functionalism has done it and because of this the sociological terms applied in political science do not carry with them proper meaning and importance. The critics are of the view that this method of analysis makes the subject cumbersome. For example, he has used "system" and "interactions" which have been borrowed from anthropology. But the import of the two terms in political system is unlikely to be same and the entire analysis appears to be confused.
2. Defining political system Almond says that interaction is to be found in all independent societies that is in order to be a system there shall be interactions among various parts or subsystems of independent societies. Now critics say that what is exactly meant by "independent" is not clear from Almond's definition. Are the societies free from foreign domination? If it so means then should we say that a system does not exist in societies controlled by foreign power? We cannot form a definite reply. Hence the ambiguity overcasts the definition of Almond. It would have been better if he had clarified his stand. We are, however, of opinion that Almond uses the term independent in general sense. A society will be called independent if it enjoys power to take decision.
 3. Some critics are of the view that he has thrown very little light on the structural aspects of political systems. He has given them new nomenclatures. He calls state a political system, institutions, structures etc. But by giving new names he has not been able to change the character and functions of political system/state. The units remain the same and there do not occur changes in functions, behaviour etc. We can say that the structural functionalism of Almond can, at best, be called a new attempt to view politics/states. It can be called a model and not more than that.
 4. Numerous factors operate behind the interaction among the system. But it is unfortunate that he has not drawn our attention to these factors. We believe that for a comprehensive analysis and for the purpose of general systems theory all these are to be brought into active consideration. Otherwise, the general systems theory will remain incomplete.
 5. The gravest charge against Almond is he has, in a clandestine way supported the existing structure of the capitalist system. He wants to establish that the capitalist system, through its management and self-regulatory mechanism, can defend itself. It is a better system in comparison with other systems.
 6. In spite of all these criticisms one might say that Almond's model (structural functionalism) is the most suitable one for comparative analyses and we come to know from his writings that he modelled this aiming at a comparative analysis. We think that his purpose has been served. With the help of structural functionalism we can easily compare the different political systems. Not only this, his model will help us compare the various systems systematically and methodologically.

Conclusively, the study of structural functionalism had its heyday with the works of Merton (noted for his study of social structure), and Almond and Coleman (who developed a taxonomy of political functions within political systems). A majority of political studies from that period used structural functionalism as their framework. The approach is still alive and used in understanding functions within political system. It is also relevant as it enable us to have a clear conception about the role of the various structures. This is essential at least for two purposes. One is a student of

political science will be able to compare various political systems. The second is, the student will be able to assess the various aspects of the political system. From the structural-functionalism, we come to know about the operational process of the political system. In the concept structural functionalism the students must know both the structures and the functions.

Conclusion

The examination of Nigeria's political landscape through the structural-functionalism framework reveals a complex interplay of diverse elements that contribute to the country's ongoing challenges. Despite being Africa's most populous nation with a wealth of resources, Nigeria faces significant issues such as mal-governance, ethnic strife, and pervasive corruption, which hinder its development and stability. Structural-functionalism posits that for a political system to be effective, all its components—be they institutions, social norms, or political practices—must work harmoniously to fulfill their roles.

In the context of Nigeria, the lack of effective communication and collaboration between the government and its citizens has resulted in a disjointed system where the needs and aspirations of various groups are often overlooked. The theory underscores the importance of social integration and the fulfillment of functions by political institutions to ensure societal cohesion and stability. Consequently, the pressing need for a restructuring of the political system becomes evident. This restructuring must encompass not only the redistribution of power among federal, state, and local governments but also a reevaluation of how governance is perceived and enacted in a diverse society.

Moreover, the structural-functional approach highlights the role of civic engagement and social responsibility. Citizens must be empowered to participate actively in the political process, fostering a culture of accountability and dialogue. It is imperative for the government to recognize and address the unique needs of Nigeria's various ethnic groups, rather than assuming a one-size-fits-all approach to governance.

Recommendations

To effectively navigate the challenges outlined in this analysis and promote a more functional and equitable political system in Nigeria, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Clarify Conceptual Definitions:** Scholars and practitioners should work towards refining the definitions of key concepts such as "independence" and "interaction" within the context of political systems. A clearer framework will facilitate better understanding and application of structural-functionalism, especially in nations like Nigeria where external influences may challenge notions of independence.
2. **Incorporate Diverse Analytical Frameworks:** To address the limitations of relying solely on structural-functionalism, it is crucial to integrate insights from other theoretical perspectives, such as post-colonial theory or critical theory. This approach can enrich analyses and account for the complexities of Nigeria's political landscape, including the effects of colonial legacies and global dynamics.
3. **Focus on Structural Dynamics:** Researchers should emphasize the structural aspects of political systems more rigorously. This includes examining how institutions evolve, the interplay between various political entities, and the impact of socio-economic factors. A more dynamic view of structures can yield insights into how systems adapt or fail in response to internal and external pressures.

4. **Acknowledge Influencing Factors:** A comprehensive analysis should incorporate the numerous factors influencing interactions within political systems, such as economic conditions, social movements, and cultural contexts. This broader lens will enhance the understanding of the complexities of governance and citizen engagement in Nigeria.
5. **Critically Evaluate Capitalist Structures:** While acknowledging the criticisms regarding the defense of capitalist structures, it is essential to critically assess how these systems affect governance and social equity in Nigeria. Encouraging discourse around alternative economic models can lead to a more inclusive approach to political analysis and development.
6. **Strengthen Comparative Analyses:** Building on the strength of Almond's model for comparative analysis, researchers should systematically compare Nigeria's political system with other nations facing similar challenges. This can provide valuable lessons and best practices for governance and institutional reform

By implementing these recommendations, Nigeria can work towards creating a more functional political system that addresses the needs and aspirations of its diverse populace. This approach not only aims to resolve current challenges but also lays the groundwork for sustainable development and long-term stability. The successful application of structural-functionalism as a lens for analysis underscores the necessity of harmonizing the various elements of the political system, ensuring that each component contributes effectively to the overall well-being of society.

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