

Structural and Functional Approach

MJC 8, Semester 5

The structural and functional approach in political science analyzes political systems as complex structures composed of interrelated components performing specific functions.

Key Components:

1. Structure: Institutions, norms, and relationships within a political system.

- Examples: Legislature, Executive, Judiciary, Bureaucracy.

2. Function: Roles and activities

performed by these structures.

- Examples: Law-making, Policy implementation, Dispute resolution.

Strengths:

1. Systematic analysis:

Comprehensive framework for analyzing political systems.

- Example: Analyzing the Indian Parliament's structure and functions.

2. Comparative analysis: Enables comparison of different political systems.

- Example: Comparing the US Presidential system with India's Parliamentary system.

3. Understanding interdependence: Highlights relationships between

components.

- Example: How the Legislature, Executive, and Judiciary interact in a democratic system.

Weaknesses:

1. Overemphasis on stability: May neglect conflict and change.

- Example: Overlooking social movements and protests.

2. Too broad: Can be difficult to apply in specific contexts.

- Example: Difficulty in analyzing authoritarian regimes.

3. Assumes equilibrium: May not account for power imbalances.

- Example: Ignoring marginalized groups' struggles.

Critique:

1. Oversimplification: May not capture complexity and nuance.

- Example: Reducing India's caste system to a simple structural analysis.

2. Lack of agency: Underestimates individual and group agency.

- Example: Overlooking citizens' activism and social movements.

3. Contextual limitations: May not account for historical and cultural contexts.

- Example: Applying Western models to non-Western societies.

Examples:

1. *India's Lok Sabha*: Structure (elected representatives) and function (law-making, representation).

2. US Supreme Court: Structure (judicial appointments) and function (interpreting laws, ensuring constitutionality).

Conclusion:

The structural and functional approach provides valuable insights into political systems. However, its limitations necessitate complementary approaches to fully understand the complexities of political phenomena.

