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# Lecture- 35



## LECTURE 35:

What are Functionalist Theory and Comte's Three stages Society has been seen thoroughly in three views viz. Functionalist Theory, Conflict Theory, and Interactionism Theory. Our society has emerged time to time from different perspective of sociologists. Functionalist Theory was the first theory in the world which was broadly studied and researched by sociologists like Parson, Kingsley Davis, Moore etc. William James You can guess the amount of impact it had the way it dominated other theories. Its impact suppressed the views Marx presented in Conflict Theories. What is Functionalist Theory? William James is called the founder of Functionalist Theory. This theory agreed with the point that society is an integration of so many parts which always work in a way that the society is always in an equilibrium. Herbert Spencer, Emile Durkheim, and Talcott Parsons work are highly dignified in Functionalist Theory. They further put a point that it is a Structural Functionalist Theory in which people, nature, economy, political party and every small aspect of society comes together and work properly in their respective roles to always keep society in a form that is harmonious and hardly affected by anything. It always studied the macro perspective of a society and did not bother to see any negative aspect of society which needs to be changed. It was way too positive driven perspective which neglected the amount of change one should see and bring. Anthony Giddens in 1984 tried to make understand everyone society arrangement through biology concept that just like our body is an organization and its internal organs should function well to keep that organization in a good condition. Just like for the better functioning of our society, its elements like human beings, family, political party's, production rate and economy should function properly to keep the society intact. Functionalist Theories agreed with the point that stratification is not a demeaning factor for our society. Sociologists put up their point of stratification as the classification done because of their respective achieved or ascribed status which is their right only. Kingsley Davis and Moore were the sociologists who said that Stratification not existing in the society is a myth. According to them, they were given a payback on the amount of work they complete for the society. It was mainly the most efficient people taking up the best roles for the betterment of society which accounts for Stratification and it is nowhere bad to have this system. Functionalist Theory also sounded like the Theory of Positivism. August Comte researched a lot in this theory and even asked to study Sociology as a different subject on a whole which was in first place studied as different subjects like Political Science, Economics, and psychology. Comte researched and agreed that sociology is nothing but three-stage development which is as follows 1. Theoretical Stage- A stage where people believed that everything happens due to the will of supernatural powers. The religious views were often regarded as fewer efforts from the human side and having a superstition attitude towards everything. This stage was at the beginning of the human story. 2. The Metaphysical Stage- A stage where society seems to develop changes of views towards supernatural powers. 3. Scientific Stage- A stage where society emphasized on the work of the scientist. It was a technical approach stage where the application of technologies was observed. Subculture A subculture is a group of people within a culture that differentiates itself from the parent culture to which it belongs, often maintaining some of its founding principles. Subcultures develop their own norms and values regarding cultural, political and sexual matters. Subcultures are part of society while keeping their specific characteristics intact. Examples of subcultures include hippies, goths and bikers. The concept of subcultures was developed in sociology and cultural studies.[1] Subcultures differ from countercultures. Definitions[ While exact definitions vary, the Oxford English Dictionary defines a subculture as "a cultural group within a larger culture, often having beliefs or interests at variance with those of the larger culture." [2] As early as 1950, David Riesman distinguished between a majority, "which passively accepted commercially provided styles and meanings, and a 'subculture' which actively sought a minority style ... and interpreted it in accordance with subversive values". [3] In his 1979 book Subculture: The Meaning of Style, Dick Hebdige argued that a subculture is a subversion to normalcy. He wrote that subcultures can be perceived as negative due to their nature of criticism to the dominant societal standard. Hebdige argued that subcultures bring together like-

minded individuals who feel neglected by societal standards and allow them to develop a sense of identity.[4] In 1995, Sarah Thornton, drawing on Pierre Bourdieu, described "subcultural capital" as the cultural knowledge and commodities acquired by members of a subculture, raising their status and helping differentiate themselves from members of other groups.[5] In 2007, Ken Gelder proposed to distinguish subcultures from countercultures based on the level of immersion in society.[6] Gelder further proposed six key ways in which subcultures can be identified through their: 1. often negative relations to work (as 'idle', 'parasitic', at play or at leisure, etc.); 2. negative or ambivalent relation to class (since subcultures are not 'class-conscious' and don't conform to traditional class definitions); 3. association with territory (the 'street', the 'hood', the club, etc.), rather than property; 4. movement out of the home and into non-domestic forms of belonging (i.e. social groups other than the family); 5. stylistic ties to excess and exaggeration (with some exceptions); 6. refusal of the banalities of ordinary life and massification.[6] Sociologists Gary Alan Fine and Sherry Kleinman argued that their 1979 research showed that a subculture is a group that serves to motivate a potential member to adopt the artifacts, behaviors, norms, and values characteristic of the group.[citation needed] History of studies[ The evolution of subcultural studies has three main steps:[7] 1. Subcultures and deviance The earliest subcultures studies came from the so-called Chicago School, who interpreted them as forms of deviance and delinquency. Starting with what they called Social Disorganization Theory, they claimed that subcultures emerged on one hand because of some population sectors' lack of socialisation with the mainstream culture and, on the other, because of their adoption of alternative axiological and normative models. As Robert E. Park, Ernest Burgess and Louis Wirth suggested, by means of selection and segregation processes, there thus appear in society natural areas or moral regions where deviant models concentrate and are re-inforced; they do not accept objectives or means of action offered by the mainstream culture, proposing different ones in their place – thereby becoming, depending on circumstances, innovators, rebels or retreatists (Richard Cloward and Lloyd Ohlin). Subcultures, however, are not only the result of alternative action strategies but also of labelling processes on the basis of which, as Howard S. Becker explains, society defines them as outsiders. As Cohen clarifies, every subculture's style, consisting of image, demeanour and language becomes its recognition trait. And an individual's progressive adoption of a subcultural model will furnish him/her with growing status within this context but it will often, in tandem, deprive him/her of status in the broader social context outside where a different model prevails.[8]. Cohen used the term 'Corner Boys' which were unable to compete with their better secured and prepared peers. These lower-class boys did not have equal access to resources, resulting in the status of frustration and search for a solution.[9] 2. Subcultures and resistance[ In the work of John Clarke, Stuart Hall, Tony Jefferson and Brian Roberts of the Birmingham CCCS (Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies), subcultures are interpreted as forms of resistance. Society is seen as being divided into two fundamental classes, the working class and the middle class, each with its own class culture, and middle-class culture being dominant. Particularly in the working class, subcultures grow out of the presence of specific interests and affiliations around which cultural models spring up, in conflict with both their parent culture and mainstream culture. Facing a weakening of class identity, subcultures are then new forms of collective identification expressing what Cohen called symbolic resistance against the mainstream culture and developing imaginary solutions for structural problems. As Paul Willis and Dick Hebdige underline, identity and resistance are expressed through the development of a distinctive style which, by a re-signification and 'bricolage' operation, use cultural industry goods to communicate and express one's own conflict. Yet the cultural industry is often capable of re-absorbing the components of such a style and once again transforming them into goods. At the same time the mass media, while they participate in building subcultures by broadcasting their images, also weaken them by depriving them of their subversive content or by spreading a stigmatized image of them.[10] 3. Subcultures and distinction[ The most recent interpretations see subcultures as forms of distinction. In an attempt to overcome the idea of subcultures as forms of deviance or resistance, they describe subcultures as collectivities which, on a cultural level, are sufficiently homogeneous internally and heterogeneous with respect to the outside world to be capable of developing, as Paul Hodkinson points out, consistent distinctiveness, identity, commitment and autonomy. Defined by Sarah Thornton as taste cultures, subcultures are endowed with elastic, porous borders, and are

inserted into relationships of interaction and mingling, rather than independence and conflict, with the cultural industry and mass media, as Steve Redhead and David Muggleton emphasize. The very idea of a unique, internally homogeneous, dominant culture is explicitly criticized. Thus forms of individual involvement in subcultures are fluid and gradual, differentiated according to each actor's investment, outside clear dichotomies. The ideas of different levels of subcultural capital (Sarah Thornton) possessed by each individual, of the supermarket of style (Ted Polhemus) and of style surfing (Martina Böse) replace that of the subculture's insiders and outsiders – with the perspective of subcultures supplying resources for the construction of new identities going beyond strong, lasting identifications. Identifying Members of the seminal punk rock band Ramones wearing early punk fashion items such as Converse sneakers, black leather jackets and blue jeans. The study of subcultures often consists of the study of symbolism attached to clothing, music and other visible affectations by members of subcultures, and also of the ways in which these same symbols are interpreted by members of the dominant culture. Dick Hebdige writes that members of a subculture often signal their membership through a distinctive and symbolic use of style, which includes fashions, mannerisms and argot.[11] Subcultures can exist at all levels of organizations, highlighting the fact that there are multiple cultures or value combinations usually evident in any one organization that can complement but also compete with the overall organisational culture.[12] In some instances, subcultures have been legislated against, and their activities regulated or curtailed.[13] British youth subcultures had been described as a moral problem that ought to be handled by the guardians of the dominant culture within the post-war consensus.[13] Relationships with mainstream culture Potato chip packages featuring hip hop subcultural designs in a case of mainstream commercial cultural merging It may be difficult to identify certain subcultures because their style (particularly clothing and music) may be adopted by mass culture for commercial purposes. Businesses often seek to capitalize on the subversive allure of subcultures in search of Cool, which remains valuable in the selling of any product.[14] This process of cultural appropriation may often result in the death or evolution of the subculture, as its members adopt new styles that appear alien to mainstream society. [15] Music-based subcultures are particularly vulnerable to this process; what may be considered subcultures at one stage in their histories – such as jazz, goth, punk, hip hop and rave cultures – may represent mainstream taste within a short period.[16] Some subcultures reject or modify the importance of style, stressing membership through the adoption of an ideology which may be much more resistant to commercial exploitation.[17] The punk subculture's distinctive (and initially shocking) style of clothing was adopted by mass-market fashion companies once the subculture became a media interest. Dick Hebdige argues that the punk subculture shares the same "radical aesthetic practices" as Dada and surrealism: Like Duchamp's 'ready mades' - manufactured objects which qualified as art because he chose to call them such, the most unremarkable and inappropriate items - a pin, a plastic clothes peg, a television component, a razor blade, a tampon - could be brought within the province of punk (un)fashion ... Objects borrowed from the most sordid of contexts found a place in punks' ensembles; lavatory chains were draped in graceful arcs across chests in plastic bin liners. Safety pins were taken out of their domestic 'utility' context and worn as gruesome ornaments through the cheek, ear or lip ... fragments of school uniform (white bri-nylon shirts, school ties) were symbolically defiled (the shirts covered in graffiti, or fake blood; the ties left undone) and juxtaposed against leather drains or shocking pink mohair tops.[18] Urban tribes[ In 1985, French sociologist Michel Maffesoli coined the term urban tribe. It gained widespread use after the publication of his *Le temps des tribus: le déclin de l'individualisme dans les sociétés postmodernes* (1988).[19] Eight years later, this book was published in the United Kingdom as *The Time of the Tribes: The Decline of Individualism in Mass Society*. [20] According to Maffesoli, urban tribes are microgroups of people who share common interests in urban areas. The members of these relatively small groups tend to have similar worldviews, dress styles and behavioral patterns.[21] Their social interactions are largely informal and emotionally laden, different from late capitalism's corporate-bourgeoisie cultures, based on dispassionate logic. Maffesoli claims that punks are a typical example of an "urban tribe".[22] Five years after the first English translation of *Le temps des tribus*, writer Ethan Watters claims to have coined the same neologism in a *New York Times Magazine* article. This was later expanded upon the idea in his book *Urban Tribes: A Generation Redefines Friendship, Family, and*

Commitment. According to Watters, urban tribes are groups of never-marrieds between the ages of 25 and 45 who gather in common-interest groups and enjoy an urban lifestyle, which offers an alternative to traditional family structures.[23] Sexual The sexual revolution of the 1960s led to a countercultural rejection of the established sexual and gender norms, particularly in the urban areas of Europe, North and South America, Australia, and white South Africa. A more permissive social environment in these areas led to a proliferation of sexual subcultures—cultural expressions of non-normative sexuality. As with other subcultures, sexual subcultures adopted certain styles of fashion and gestures to distinguish them from the mainstream.[24] Homosexuals expressed themselves through the gay culture, considered the largest sexual subculture of the 20th century. With the ever-increasing acceptance of homosexuality in the early 21st century, including its expressions in fashion, music, and design, the gay culture can no longer be considered a subculture in many parts of the world, although some aspects of gay culture like leathermen, bears, and feeders are considered subcultures within the gay movement itself.[24] The butch and femme identities or roles among some lesbians also engender their own subculture with stereotypical attire, for instance drag kings.[25] A late 1980s development, the queer movement can be considered a subculture broadly encompassing those that reject normativity in sexual behavior, and who celebrate visibility and activism. The wider movement coincided with growing academic interests in queer studies and queer theory. Aspects of sexual subcultures can vary along other cultural lines. For instance, in the United States, down-low refers to African-American men who do not identify themselves with the gay or queer cultures, but who practice gay cruising, and adopt a specific hip-hop attire during this activity.[25] Social media In a 2011 study, Brady Robards and Andy Bennett said that online identity expression has been interpreted as exhibiting subcultural qualities. However, they argue it is more in line with neotribalism than with what is often classified as subculture. Social networking websites are quickly becoming the most used form of communication and means to distribute information and news. They offer a way for people with similar backgrounds, lifestyles, professions or hobbies to connect. According to a co-founder and executive creative strategist for RE-UP, as technology becomes a "life force," subcultures become the main bone of contention for brands as networks rise through cultural mash-ups and phenomena.[26] Where social media is concerned, there seems to be a growing interest among media producers to use subcultures for branding. This is seen most actively on social network sites with user-generated content, such as YouTube. Social media expert Scott Huntington cites one of the ways in which subcultures have been and can be successfully targeted to generate revenue: "It's common to assume that subcultures aren't a major market for most companies. Online apps for shopping, however, have made significant strides. Take Etsy, for example. It only allow vendors to sell handmade or vintage items, both of which can be considered a rather "