SR 968-22: Sociological Methodology: Interpreting Changing Cultures

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Sociological Framework for Cultural Analysis

In sociology, cultural analysis is used to examine how social structures interact with cultural phenomena in order to offer insight into how culture shapes and is shaped by the dynamics of a society. As part of a robust sociological framework for cultural analysis, a variety of perspectives are integrated, including structural-functionalism, conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism, in order to better understand culture's practices, beliefs, and artifacts.

According to structural-functionalists, culture is regarded as a cohesive force that maintains the stability of society at large. According to this view, cultural norms and values contribute to social order and integration by promoting social order and harmony. Among other things, shared rituals and traditions reinforce a sense of belonging and collective identity, thereby ensuring societal continuity as a whole (Giddens et al., 2018).

According to conflict theory, that is, the theory that emphasizes power and inequality as the factors that shape cultural dynamics, on the other hand. It is argued that dominant groups use cultural expressions in order to maintain a position of hegemony and to marginalize alternatives. The media representation can, for example, perpetuate stereotypes, thereby reinforcing a hierarchical system in society (Small et al., 2022).

There is a focus on symbolic interactionism that focuses on the micro-level interactions that are the basis for the creation and maintenance of culture. A key aspect of the book emphasizes the importance of symbols, language, and everyday practices in the construction of cultural meanings. It has been noted that hashtags are often used to generate virtual communities, shaping collective identities on social media platforms, such as Facebook (Barker &amp; Jane, 2016).

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