

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

Suleiman Muhammad and Basiru Ahmad

Department of Political Science, Federal University Birnin Kebbi

Corresponding Author's email: sulenairazkk@gmail.com



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*