

Chapter 2 - Theoretical Perspectives on Human Behavior

SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE

- *Sees human behavior as the outcome of interactions within and among systems of interrelated parts (interdisciplinary).*
- ***Boundary**
 - o Indicating who is in and who is out
- ***Feedback Mechanisms**
 - o Information about past behaviors in a system are fed back into the system in a circular manner.
- Two types of systems
 - o **Closed** = isolated from other systems
 - o **Open** = in constant interaction with other systems
- **Ecological Theory**
 - o The relationships/interactions between living organisms and environments.
 - o Holistic view of practice → multiple environmental influences; importance of physical and social environments in human behavior.
- **Risk & Resilience Theory**
 - o Proposes risk and protective factors in person and environment.
 - o Risk factors = increase likelihood of harmful outcome
 - o Protective factors = positive outcome
- **Complex Systems Theory**
 - o WE are part of numerous interacting systems that are linked through dense interactions.
 - o Uncertainty → Unpredictability
- ***Chaos Theory**
 - o Although complexity creates disorder, there is actually an underlying order that can be discussed through computer models.
 - *Negative Feedback Loops*
 - *Positive Feedback Loops*

CONFLICT PERSPECTIVE

- *Emphasizes conflicts that arise because of inequalities in the distribution of resources.*
- **Critical Theorists**
 - o Argue that capitalism underwent change; people were more likely to be controlled by culture than by their work position.

- o Our lives became dominated by the culture industry, which is controlled by mass media.
- o Turns workers into consumers – advertising industry, exploitation
- **Critical Race Theory**
 - o Developed by legal scholars who wanted to draw attention to racial oppression in the law and society (ex: microaggressions).
- **Intersectionality Theory**
 - o Pluralistic approach that recognizes vectors of oppression and privilege, including not only gender but also class, race, global location, sexual orientation, and age.
- **Empowerment Theories**
 - o Focus on processes that individuals and collectivities can use to recognize patterns of inequality and injustice and take action to increase their own power.
- **Feminist Theories**
 - o Focus on male domination of the major institutions and present a vision of a just world based on gender equity.
 - o People are socialized to see themselves through the eyes of powerful actors.

EXCHANGE & CHOICE PERSPECTIVE

- *Roots in behavioral psychology, economics, anthropology, philosophy, and sociology.*
 - o *Focus on the processes whereby individual and collective actors seek and exchange resources and the choices made in pursuit of those choices.*
- **Social Exchange Theory**
 - o Interaction in which resources are exchanged, as the core process in social life.
 - o Based on the desire to maximize benefits and minimize costs, as basic belief that social relationships occur in a social marketplace in which people give in order to get.
- **Reciprocity**
 - o Receiving resources requires giving resources of relatively equal value; such exchanges build trust over time.
 - o The most comfortable exchanges are those in which actors have equality of resources and that trust is fragile in unequal relationships.
- **Rational Choice Theory**
 - o Shares with exchange theories the view that humans are rational (weighing rewards and costs), purposive, and motivated by self-interest.
- **Social Network Theory**
 - o Exchange network = a set of actors linked together, both directly and indirectly through exchange relationships.

- Social networks are typically presented visually, with members of the network – individuals, groups, or organizations – represented as points.

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONIST PERSPECTIVE

- *How people construct meaning, a sense of self, and a social world through their interactions with each other.*
 - *Learn to classify their world and their place in it.*
 - *Interact based on **shared meanings***
- **Symbolic Interaction Theory**
 - *As humans interact, they develop symbols to which they attach meaning.*
 - *Society constructed by human beings engaging in symbolic interaction.*

PSYCHODYNAMIC PERSPECTIVE

- *Concerned with how internal processes such as needs, drives, and emotions motivate human behavior*

DEVELOPMENTAL PERSPECTIVE

- *How human behavior unfolds across the life course, how people change and stay the same over time.*
 - *Human development seen to occur in clearly defined stages based on a complex interaction of biological, psychological, and social processes.*

SOCIAL BEHAVIORAL PERSPECTIVE

- **Social Learning Perspective**
 - *Suggests that human behavior is learned as individuals interact with their environments.*
- **Classical Conditioning Theory (Respondent conditioning)**
 - *Sees behavior as learned through association, when a naturally occurred stimulus (US) is paired with a neutral stimulus (CS).*
 - *Eventually leads to Conditioned Response*
 - *Looks for antecedents of behavior (stimuli that precede behavior)*
- **Operant Conditioning Theory (Instrumental Conditioning)**
 - *Sees behavior as the rules of reinforcement*
 - *Behavior is strengthened or weakened by the reinforcement (rewards and punishments) it receives or, in other words, by the consequences of the behavior.*