

## More Functionalism

- When discussing Functionalism it is important to note that the idea of 'function' is concerned with the purpose one part plays to the whole. The family, for example, contributes to producing and socialising further members of the society
- Some critics have argued that Functionalism has been built upon **conservative bias** that supports the **status quo** as it has tended to look at the positive functions of certain institutions and has termed some, such as the family, as indispensable



- Functionalism is a **consensus** theory meaning that it is based on general agreement amongst those in society about what is required to maintain its stability

## Interactionism

- Interactionism takes a **micro** approach when studying society. It is concerned with **social action** and so looks at society on a small scale. It is sometimes referred to as **Interpretivism**
- Interactionists focus on how individuals interact with each other in small environments and with how they define themselves, other people and the predicaments they find themselves in
- They put emphasis on the meanings that individuals place on situations. These are negotiated by the **actors** concerned



## Interactionism again

Social action theorists suggest that individuals **place meanings** on the different roles they play in society. It is a creative process that individuals define and redefine their roles. It is not part of a predetermined structure like functionalists would argue.

- **Symbolic Interactionism** refers to the way in which people react to symbols within the society they live in, the most common being language.



- This theory suggests that to understand human society it is necessary to discover the meanings placed upon the symbols that are used

## More Interactionism

- Interactionists argue that individuals influence how others perceive us by using certain techniques of **Impression management**.

People continuously **perform** to convey an appearance of dedicated student or good friend etc. To carry them off, Interactionists suggest that **props** are used such as textbooks for a student or white coat for a doctor.

- Because every individual in the society is performing they watch how others to perform to assess how they feel about the situation they are in
- Critics Interactionism argue that the wider social structure can not simply be ignored as it influences the those in the society
- **Remember** Interactionism is conducted on a small scale