

OUTLINE Lecture 21. Sociology 621. The State and Accumulation: functionality & contradiction
November 28, 2011

I. THE FUNCTIONALIST LOGIC OF THE THEORY OF THE STATE

1 Negative Selection & Functionality

2 Key problem for functionalist explanation = Feedback process involving three elements

- an account of *political class struggle*: process of creating class filters,
- an account of *systemic pressures* which make certain solutions stable and others precarious
- an account of *institutional learning*: trial-and-error corrections to failures

II. FOUR SOURCES OF PROBLEMATIC FUNCTIONALITY :

1. LEGITIMATION VS. ACCUMULATION = CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN STATE FUNCTIONS

2. AUTONOMY VS SUBORDINATION: CONTRADICTIONS WITHIN THE ACCUMULATION FUNCTION

2.1 Thesis 1: the state must intervene to prevent capitalism from destroying itself economically.

2.2 Thesis 2: The state needs autonomy to be able to act functionally.

2.3 Thesis 3: The FRANKENSTEIN PROBLEM: *to be able to autonomously intervene functionally the state must have the capacity to do so destructively.*

- Problem #1: once this capacity is created, then it becomes a target for manipulation for narrow interests
- Problem #2: Extending the interventionist capacity → perpetual problem of lines of demarcation between state and economy as principles of action: *there is no stable equilibrium.*
- Problem #3: the interaction of the state with the normative system → As the state increases interventionist capacity for accumulation it is harder to restrict its availability for Legitimation reasons.

2.4 Conclusion: *Three mega-theses*

1. *Functionalism thesis:* The state is functionally required by capitalism to overcome the self-destructive tendencies of capitalism.
2. *Frankenstein thesis:* to fulfill these functions the state must have the capacity to potentially act dysfunctionally (i.e. have real autonomy of policy formation and action)
3. *Contradiction thesis:* Various dynamics are set in motion which make it increasingly probable that the state will act dysfunctionally → *crisis of crisis management.*

3. CONTRADICTIONS IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE RATIONALITY OF THE STATE POLICY FORMATION PROCESS

3.1 Three alternative logics of decisionmaking

1. *Bureaucratic procedures:* rational-legal application of fixed rules
2. *technical rationality:* application of expertise to solve problems
3. *democratic consensus:* formation of interest consensus via democratic-participatory forms

3.2 Pivotal dilemma = These alternatives are all ultimately unsatisfactory in a capitalist context → contradictory articulation of *decision-making logic* and *functional requirements* of accumulation

4. INTERNATIONALIZATION OF CAPITAL AND THE STATE: *disjunction of functional problems and institutional solutions*