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Some Problems on Merton's Functional Theory

Yasuo Yokoyama

The functional theory has recently taken a new turn by Merton's contribution. But I cannot help having some questions about the treatment of his concept of " dysfunction ". The functional relation in humanistic coefficient is laid upon the subjective, dynamic equilibrium, which cannot be explained simply by saying that social function may be functional for some groups and dysfunctional for other groups. The problem is how some institution is supported by the members of a society. Merton says that social function refers to observable objective consequences, and not to subjective dispositions, and the failure to distinguish between the sociological consequences and the psychological dispositions leads to confusion of functional analysis. I think it is ture. But he does not directly present " negative function ", but the concept of dysfunction, as a co-ordinate concept of positive function. We must admit, however, that there is strength in the degree of subjective intention, accordingly, in the degree of function. Owning to the very existence of a group of large member which affirms negatively the institutions, they presently continue to exist whithout being erased, however anti-social they may be. This group of negative function constitutes an unstable class of constant changes between functional and dysfunctional groups; it has, however, an important roll to mediate the equilibrium of the above-mentioned antipodal groups.