

# Differences between...



**Structural Theories** are a form of **macro-sociology** – they are based upon assumptions that society is more important than the individual as society continues after the individual has left.

Structural Theories are **deterministic** in nature – they argue that social forces are responsible for individuals behaviours. **Social Institutions and Social Structures**, such as education, religion, social class and gender dictate our behaviour in social contexts

Structural Theories look at large-scale problems and tend to use **quantitative data** in their research. **Functionalism, traditional Marxism** and some branches of **Feminism** are structural theories – looking at ‘the big picture’ in society – these are called **Metanarratives**



**Social Action Theories** are a form of **micro-sociology** – based upon the assumption that people have **free will**, or **agency**, to choose to behave in a certain way

Social Action Theories argue that **society is constructed and shaped by the decisions of individuals**. Social institutions are shaped by policies that individuals create. They also argue that **individuals interpret society in different ways** and will have a broad range of reactions to social forces. They are not predictable.

Social Action Theories use **qualitative data** in their research as it give them an **insight (verstehen)** into human behaviour. **Interactionism and Post-Modernism** are most common social action theories

## structural and social action theories