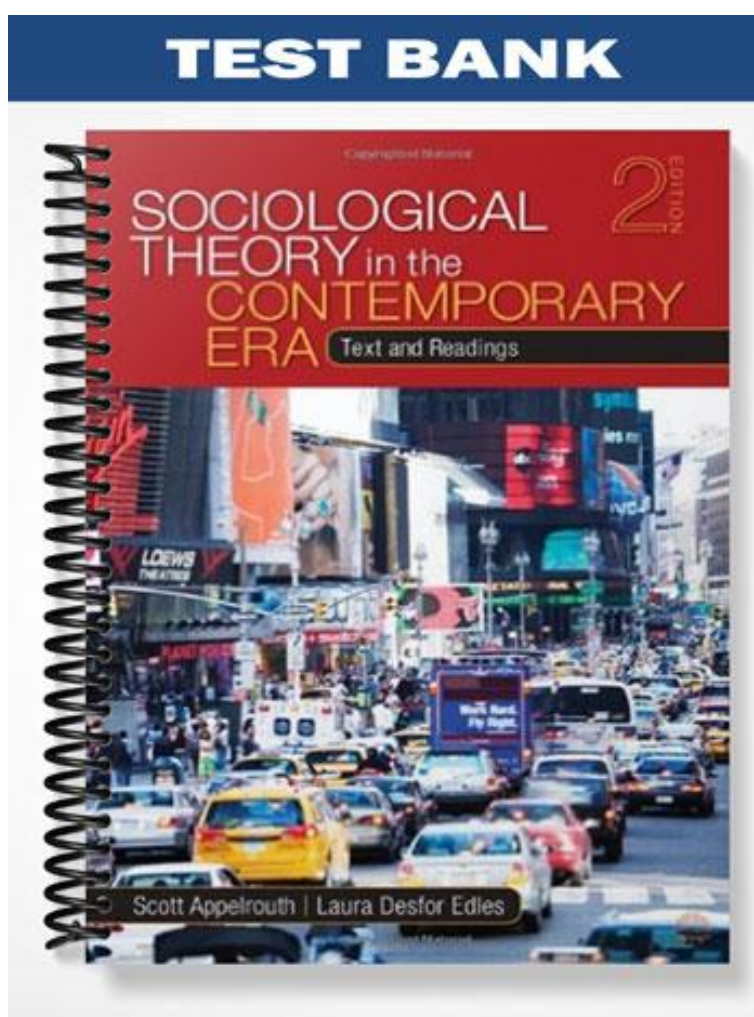


TEST BANK



Chapter Two: Structural Functionalism

Multiple-Choice

1. A hypothetical actor in a hypothetical situation bounded by an array of parameters and conditions is called a
 - a) role-set.
 - b) latent.
 - c) unit act.
 - d) manifest.
2. Parsons saw social action as composed of four basic elements that distinguish it from isolated, individual behavior. These four elements include:
 - a) gender, class, norms, effort
 - b) goals, situations, norms, effort
 - c) class, agency, situations, effort
 - d) latency, agency, norms, effort
3. A _____ is a complex arrangement of interconnected social roles.
 - a) cultural system
 - b) personality system
 - c) role-set
 - d) social system
4. A complement of interdependent social relationships in which persons are involved simply because they occupy a particular social status is called a
 - a) role-set.
 - b) latent.
 - c) unit act.
 - d) manifest.
5. Parsons defines the personality system as
 - a) a system of action organized by role-sets.
 - b) a system of action organized by cultural systems.
 - c) a system of action organized by unit acts.
 - d) a system of action organized by need-dispositions
6. Values, norms and symbols which guide the choices made by actors and which limit the type of interaction which may occur among actors is defined by Parsons as
 - a) personality system.
 - b) social system.
 - c) cultural system.
 - d) role-set.

7. According to Parsons, the personality, social, and cultural systems interpenetrate each other through
 - a) socialization, internalization, and institutionalization.
 - b) socialization, externalization, and gemeinschaft.
 - c) socialization, gesellschaft, and culturalization.
 - d) socialization, externalization, and institutionalization.

8. Pattern variables are an extension of a renowned dichotomy first formulated by whom?
 - a) Karl Marx
 - b) Ferdinand Tönnies
 - c) Max Weber
 - d) Charles Horton Cooley

9. Which of the following concepts refers to the variant normative priorities of social systems, the dominant modes of orientation in personality systems, and the patterns of values in cultural systems?
 - a) role-set
 - b) cultural system
 - c) pattern variables
 - d) gesellschaft

10. Which of the following would match up with the concept of gemeinschaft?
 - a) self-orientation
 - b) universalism
 - c) specificity
 - d) particularism

11. Which of the following is *not* one of the four basic problems that a society, group, or individual must confront in order to survive as a system of action?
 - a) Amalgamation
 - b) Goal attainment
 - c) Integration
 - d) Latent pattern maintenance

12. Which of the following concepts from *Sex Roles in the American Kinship System* can be viewed as still relevant from a twenty-first century perspective?
 - a) Many women succumb to dependency cravings.
 - b) Men are valued on their occupational skills; women are not.
 - c) Discrepancy between men's love for woman and her inferiority.
 - d) Women abdicate their opportunities for genuine independence.

13. In *Sex Roles in the American Kinship System*, Parsons argues that the "utilitarian" division of labor between men and women is functional, and thus beneficial, both for the economy and the family. Specifically, he contends that the kinship structure provides for
 - a) the reduction of status competition and jealousy between husband and wife, and thus more stable marriages.

- b) a labor force in which workers are trained and rewarded on the basis of merit.
 - c) the socialization and psychological security of children.
 - d) all of the above.
14. Manifest functions refer to
- a) the accomplishing of purposively directed goals.
 - b) unintended consequences.
 - c) the harmful effects resulting from intended actions.
 - d) alternative ways of meeting system needs.
15. Latent functions refer to
- a) the accomplishing of purposively directed goals.
 - b) unintended consequences.
 - c) the harmful effects resulting from intended actions.
 - d) alternative ways of meeting system needs.
16. Robert Merton contrasted Parsons because Merton favored
- a) master conceptual schema.
 - b) middle-range theory.
 - c) research oriented work.
 - d) theory un-connected to research.
17. Perhaps Merton greatest contribution to functionalism and sociology is that he
- a) showed Parsons's system did not exist.
 - b) showed that system components may or may not be "in sync."
 - c) proved Parsons's system to be foolproof.
 - d) confirmed Parsons's notion of deviant sex-roles.
18. Which refers to "modes of action that do not conform to the dominant norms or values in a social group or society"?
- a) Dysfunction
 - b) Latent function
 - c) Deviance
 - d) Manifest function
19. Different parts of a system may be at odds with each other and can produce unintended negative consequences or
- a) deviance.
 - b) latent function.
 - c) dysfunction.
 - d) manifest function.
20. Merton's concepts of values, social status, role expectations, and goals all fall within which basic theoretical orientation?
- a) Nonrational/collective
 - b) Nonrational/individual

- c) Rational/collective
- d) Rational/individual

True/False

1. Beginning in the 1970s, structural functionalism at best was viewed as an old-fashioned tradition with a conservative bias.
 - a) True
 - b) False

2. Parsons's single most important idea is that action must not be viewed in isolation.
 - a) True
 - b) False

3. For Parsons, actions are empirically discrete.
 - a) True
 - b) False

4. Parsons believed personality, social and cultural systems function together to produce social order and stability.
 - a) True
 - b) False

5. Parsons worked in middle-range theories while Merton developed master schema.
 - a) True
 - b) False

9. Deviance occurs when the values of a society are out of sync with the means available for achieving them.
 - a) True
 - b) False

6. Merton enhanced the Parsonian notion of society through his conceptions of manifest and latent functions.
 - a) True
 - b) False

7. Merton proposed that status of a role is fixed.
 - a) True
 - b) False

8. Merton's work is far less abstract than Parsons's, but it is no less theoretically multidimensional.
 - a) True
 - b) False

10. Overall, structural functionalism tends to emphasize the collective/nonrational realm.

- a) True
- b) False

Short Answer

1. Explain the four basic elements that compose social action according to Parsons.
2. Define and explain in detail how the personality, social, and cultural systems interpenetrate each other.
3. Define and compare the AGIL scheme to pattern variables.
4. According to Parsons, what four needs must all social systems meet in order to sustain equilibrium? What subsystems perform these necessary functions? (Provide both the theoretical label and a concrete example for each.)
5. Summarize Parsons's points from *Sex Roles in the American Kinship System*. Explain which points were criticized by later scholars and why.
6. What is a *principal* manifest function of establishing the legal right of women to choose an abortion? What might be a latent function?
7. Discuss how Merton's concepts of manifest and latent functions enhanced Parsons's notion of society.
8. Define deviance and dysfunction and explain how it relates to Parsons's body of work.
9. Discuss Merton's contribution to role-theory specifically in regards to social status and role-sets.
10. Choose one of Merton's concepts and explain why it sits where it does in the authors' basic theoretical orientation chart.

Essay

1. Explain and define the social, personality, and cultural systems. In addition, define and explain each way these systems interpenetrate one another.
2. Explain the concept of and specifically define all of Parsons's pattern variables.
3. Explain the concept and define each component of Parsons's AGIL scheme. Use a concrete contemporary example in your explanation.

4. Discuss the following quotation from Parsons "...serves to concentrate the judgment and valuation of men on their occupational achievements, while the valuation of women is diverted into realms outside the occupationally relevant sphere." Explain how the quote fits into the larger argument Parsons is proposing.

5. Discuss how Merton's conceptions of manifest and latent functions, deviance, and dysfunction enhanced Parsons's conception of society and structural functionalism in general.

Answer Key

Multiple Choice

1. c
2. b
3. d
4. a
5. d
6. c
7. a
8. b
9. c
10. d
11. a
12. b
13. a
14. a
15. b
16. b
17. b
18. c
19. c
20. a

True/False

1. a
2. a
3. b
4. a
5. b
6. a
7. b
8. a
9. a
10. a

Short Answer

1. Parsons saw social action as composed of four basic elements that distinguish it from

isolated, individual behavior. Social action is oriented toward attainment of ends or goals. Social action takes place in *situations*, consisting of the physical and social objects to which the actor relates. Social action is normatively regulated (i.e., regulated by *norms* that guide the orientation of action). Social action involves expenditure of *effort* or energy.

2. The personality, social, and cultural systems interpenetrate each other through socialization, internalization, and institutionalization. Socialization refers to the process by which individuals come to regard specific norms as binding. It necessarily involves a community, as it is a process of social learning. Internalization refers to the process by which the individual personality system incorporates some specific interpretation of cultural symbols into its need-dispositions. Finally, cultural values and norms are institutionalized at the level of the social system. Institutionalization refers to the longstanding processes of communal association that bind actors to particular meanings. Institutionalization privileges particular symbolic constructions and, at the same time, curtails resistance to social norms.
3. The pattern variables are a set of five “choices” that, akin to the AGIL scheme, apply not only to the individual level but to the collective level as well. They refer at once to the variant normative priorities of social systems, the dominant modes of orientation in personality systems, and the patterns of values in cultural systems. The AGIL paradigm included adaptation, goal attainment, integration, and latency as prerequisites for society to survive.
4. The AGIL paradigm includes adaptation, goal attainment, integration, and latency as prerequisites for society to survive. Adaptation (A) refers to responses to the physical environment. At the level of the social system, the economy typically fulfills the requirement of adaptation. Goal attainment (G) refers to the problem of resolving the discrepancies between “the inertial tendencies of the system and its ‘needs’ resulting from interchange with the situation”. At the level of the social system, the requirement of goal attainment is typically met by the *polity*. The polity and government establish status and reward systems so that social goals can be attained. Integration (I) refers to the coordination of a system’s or subsystem’s constituent parts, since “all social systems are differentiated and segmented into relatively independent units”. Integration involves *solidarity*, that is the feeling of “we-ness” that develops in a social group as distinct roles are carried out; integration depends on interaction and the norms that guide interaction more so than abstract cultural values. Latent pattern maintenance (L) refers to the “imperative of maintaining the stability of the patterns of institutionalized culture”. Within the social system, the function of latent pattern maintenance, that is the maintaining of shared values, is most readily apparent in the realm of religion.
5. In the 1970s *Sex Roles in the American Kinship System* came to epitomize Parsons’s conservatism, interpreted as it was as an explicit endorsement by Parsons of traditional gender roles and the dire consequences that would ensue should they be breeched. Feminists were particularly incensed by Parsons’s assertion that “many women succumb to . . . dependency cravings through such channels as neurotic illness or compulsive domesticity” which leads them to “abdicate both their responsibilities and their opportunities for genuine independence” (1943:194). In addition, they found Parsons’s assumption that “surely the pattern of romantic love which makes his relation to the ‘woman he loves’ the most important

single thing in a man's life, is incompatible with the view that she is an inferior creature, fit only for dependency on him" especially naïve.

6. For Merton, manifest function refers to the overt or intended purpose of action. Latent function, on the other hand, refers to implicit or unintended purpose. A manifest function of legal abortion is to provide women agency through a legal option for terminating an unwanted pregnancy. Some possible latent functions for establishing legal abortion is to devalue the act of procreation; to shift sexual control from men to women, and to enter a biological/medical/legal decision into the discussion arenas of religion and morality.
7. Merton's concept of manifest and latent function greatly enhances the Parsonian notion of society as a system of interrelated parts, not only because it acknowledges that there are multiple functions for any one component, but because it underscores that the various functions within even a single component might not coincide with each other or that they might even conflict. Whereas Parsons's conceptualization of society as a system of interrelated parts seemed to imply that all social institutions were inherently functional—otherwise they would not exist—Merton emphasized that different parts of a system might be at odds with each other and, thus, that even functional or beneficial institutions or subsystems can produce *dysfunctions* or *unintended consequences* as well.
8. Deviance occurs when the *values* of a society are out of sync with the *means* available for achieving them. Émile Durkheim first emphasized that while positive social changes, such as periods of economic prosperity, might alleviate certain problems, they may also produce significant unanticipated negative consequences. Merton not only elaborated on Durkheim's point that positive social institutions (or changes) may have unintended negative consequences; he went on to show that negative (or benign) social institutions (or social changes) might have unanticipated positive consequences as well. But it is for highlighting the "negative" unintended consequences and dysfunctions that Merton is most known. Significantly, the concept of dysfunction is not incompatible with the functionalist metaphor of the body. Merton points out, laws, social policies, norms, values, religions, and the like can all produce unintended consequences and dysfunctions. Similarly, Merton made a significant contribution to role theory by demonstrating that "social status" and "role-sets" are organized in the social structure in a more complex way than Parsons initially supposed.
9. Similarly, Merton made a significant contribution to role theory by demonstrating that "social status" and "role-sets" are organized in the social structure in a more complex way than Parsons initially supposed. Specifically, Merton (1996:43) defines *social status* as "a position in a social system, with its distinctive array of designated rights and obligations." That is, the status of a role is not fixed, but rather changes in conjunction with the particular role-set involved. Yet, the point is that not only role statuses but also role-expectations and role obligations shift in interaction. Consequently, not only is role conflict inevitable because any one individual plays multiple roles (e.g., you are a Little League coach on your way to the big game, when your elderly mother calls because she needs you to take her to the doctor); even within one role, conflict may occur because of the multiple role-sets involved.

10. Individuals are socialized into roles, and they internalize role-expectations, which duly reflects and involves both the individual actor-ego and the social system. Above all, however, “role-sets” speak to the nonrational dimension of action in that even the most “strategic” playing of roles inevitably rests on symbols and values.

Essay Questions

1. Actions are organized into three modes or realms: social systems, personality systems, and cultural systems. These systems are a simplified model of society that Parsons and Shils use to explain the organization of action. The social system refers to the level of integrated interaction between two or more actors. Social systems are not material structures or institutions (such as a university) but rather a complex arrangement of interconnected social roles. The personality system refers to a system of action organized by need-dispositions, both organic and emotional, at the level of the individual. For Parsons, the personality is a distinct level of social life; physical separateness of one’s body never entails complete social or cultural differentiation, as personal uniqueness is itself a function of interaction and socialization. The cultural system is made up of the values, norms and symbols which guide the choices made by actors and which limit the type of interaction which may occur among actors. It is composed of intangible ideas and broad symbolic patterns of meaning that establish boundaries of social behavior. The personality, social, and cultural systems interpenetrate each other through socialization, internalization, and institutionalization. Socialization refers to the process by which individuals come to regard specific norms as binding. It necessarily involves a community, as it is a process of social learning. Internalization refers to the process by which the individual personality system incorporates some specific interpretation of cultural symbols into its need-dispositions. Finally, cultural values and norms are institutionalized at the level of the social system. Institutionalization refers to the longstanding processes of communal association that bind actors to particular meanings. Institutionalization privileges particular symbolic constructions and, at the same time, curtails resistance to social norms.

2. In *Toward a General Theory of Action* (1951), Parsons and Shils develop a set of concepts called the pattern variables. The pattern variables are a set of five “choices” that, akin to the AGIL scheme, apply not only to the individual level but to the collective level as well. They refer at once to the variant normative priorities of social systems, the dominant modes of orientation in personality systems, and the patterns of values in cultural systems. A pattern variable is :a dichotomy that describes alternatives of action between which each person (or group) has to choose in every situation. The actions are shaped by the personality, cultural, and social systems. First we have Affectivity/Affective-Neutrality. With affectivity, emotional impulses are gratified; while with Affective-neutrality emotional impulses are inhibited. The next binary is Self-Orientation/Collectivity-Orientation. In Self-orientation, action is based on the actor’s own interests, needs, and goals; whereas with Collectivity-orientation action is based on what is best for the “collectivity.” Then there is the Universalism/Particularism binary. With Universalism action is based on “general standards” or universal laws and moral rules while with Particularism action is based on the priority and attachment actors place on relationships and situations. With the Ascription/Achievement binary, in Ascription action based

on given attributes (race, sex, age) whereas with Achievement action is based on performance. The final binary is Specificity/Diffuseness. With Specificity action is based on specific criteria/roles whereas Diffuseness is open guidelines for action.

3. Parsons maintains that there are four “functional imperatives” or requirements encountered by all action systems. That is, there are four basic problems that a society, group, or individual must confront in order to survive as a system of action. Parsons called these four problems or functions adaptation, goal attainment, integration, and latent pattern maintenance. Parsons’s students used the acronym “AGIL” to refer to this scheme. These four functions or requirements are evident at every level of every system, from entire social systems, to particular subsystems, to the level of the individual actor-ego. *Adaptation* (A) refers to responses to the physical environment. At the level of the social system, the economy typically fulfills the requirement of adaptation. That is, the economy is the subsystem that adapts to the environment for social purposes (providing goods and services). *Goal attainment* (G) refers to the problem of resolving the discrepancies between “the inertial tendencies of the system and its ‘needs’ resulting from interchange with the situation”. At the level of the social system, the requirement of goal attainment is typically met by the *polity*, as it is the realm in which goals and resources are prioritized, and discrepancies are resolved. The polity and government establish status and reward systems so that social goals can be attained. *Integration* (I) refers to the coordination of a system’s or subsystem’s constituent parts, since “all social systems are differentiated and segmented into relatively independent units”. Within the four systems of action (behavioral organism, personality, social system, and cultural system), the function of integration is met primarily by the social system. *Latent pattern maintenance* (L) refers to the “imperative of maintaining the stability of the patterns of institutionalized culture”. This function is carried out primarily by the cultural system, as it is through culture (made up of shared meanings and values) that specific patterns of behavior are maintained. Within the social system, the function of latent pattern maintenance, that is the maintaining of shared values, is most readily apparent in the realm of religion.

4. In the 1970s Sex Roles in the American Kinship System came to epitomize Parsons’s conservatism, interpreted as it was as an explicit endorsement by Parsons of traditional gender roles and the dire consequences that would ensue should they be breeched. Feminists were particularly incensed by Parsons’s assertion that “many women succumb to . . . dependency cravings through such channels as neurotic illness or compulsive domesticity” which leads them to “abdicate both their responsibilities and their opportunities for genuine independence” (1943:194). In addition, they found Parsons’s assumption that “surely the pattern of romantic love which makes his relation to the ‘woman he loves’ the most important single thing in a man’s life, is incompatible with the view that she is an inferior creature, fit only for dependency on him” especially naïve. Yet, interestingly, read in the context of the twenty-first century, one can see that in some respects Parsons got a “bad rap” for this essay. Although there is no question that his description of the ideal, typical, white middle-class family is told from an upper-middle-class white male’s point of view, in fact, Parsons did capture important elements of this system. For instance, certainly his assertion that this traditional role structure “serves to concentrate the judgment and valuation of men on their occupational achievements, while the valuation of women is diverted into realms outside the occupationally relevant sphere” rings true. Indeed, one can even read this statement as an indictment of the traditional kinship system because of its demeaning effect on women. Parsons’s most pivotal premise, however—that

changes that are functional for one part of the system (e.g., the benefits to women and society as women enter the paid workforce) will produce changes that are not necessarily functional for other parts of the system (e.g., the schools, which relied on the free labor of female “volunteers” for essential tasks—is not necessarily sexist at all, in the sense that what *is* sexist is the assumption (prevalent in the 1960s and 1970s) that women *could* enter the workforce without significant changes being made to other social structures and systems (e.g., families, schools, the workplace) and, at the least, without a major increase in quality day-care and child-care facilities.

5. In contrast to Parsons, who sought to delineate a highly abstract, master conceptual schema, Merton favored what he called middle-range theory. Merton’s middle-range reformulation of structural functionalism made it eminently more useful. Perhaps the single most important contribution that Merton made to functionalism—and sociology—is that he extended Parsons’s point that society is a system of interrelated parts and reworked it in order to emphasize that the components of the system may or may not be “in sync,” and that the results are not always predictable. This pivotal theoretical contribution is readily apparent not only in Merton’s highly influential concepts of manifest and latent function and dysfunction, but also in his oft-cited theory of deviance.