I. Structural Functionalism, Theorists and Influences

1. Theorists: Talcott Parsons and Robert Merton
2. Parsons: *Structure of Social Action*, *The Social System*

2. Merton: *Social Theory and Social Structure*

B. Dominant sociological theory: WWII to 1970

C. Influence: classical theory

1. Durkheim

2. Weber

D. Influence: Social Context (Utopian America 1950s)

1. America is utopia: “end of history”

2. economic system: capitalism without class

a. middle class society

b. meritocracy

c. workers

3. political system: pluralistic system of power

a. Americans are free and the measure of freedom

b. two party system makes our democracy stable

4. progress = technological development

a. technology will solve the few remaining social problems

b. increase convenience and leisure time

5. “Good “ Life: The "American dream"

a. nuclear family

b. consumerism

6. Deviance

II. Parsons’ Structural Functionalism Theory

A. Society is a system that functions as a harmonious whole

1. system is composed of numerous subsystems.

2. stability (social order) is goal and unquestioned good

3. all parts of the system are necessary and positive towards stability

4. example: organism (homeostasis), mechanical system (car, refrigerator)

1. Goal of social theory: explain how the various parts of the system function in relation to each other and the overall system.

C. In order for a system to maintain stability it must perform the following FUNCTIONS: AGIL

1. ADAPT to the environment

2. Be able to define and achieve GOALS

3. INTEGRATE component parts so they function harmoniously

4. Provide cultural patterns that are the glue that holds society together: LATENCY

D. It order to perform AGIL a system must have STRUCTURAL Components to address AGIL

1. Behavioral System: adaptation

2. Personality System: Goal attainment

3. Social System: Integration

4. Cultural System: latency function\*\*\*\*

E. Cultural system\*\*\*\*\* and the latency function

1. cultural patterns

a. social stock of common knowledge (conventional wisdom)

b. ideas, beliefs, rituals, norms and values

2. major force binding society together: latency function

a. institutionalized in social system

b. internalized in personality system through socialization

3. separate system but within each system

F. Social system

1. subsystems

2. basic unit: status role complex

a. status: positions within institutions

b. role: demands and expectations of position

c. hierarchy

d. individuals selected to fill status role complexes

G. Personality system: function of social and cultural systems

1. Basic component: need disposition

1. not biological
2. drives shaped by social setting (status role)

“The combination of value-orientation patterns that are acquired ( by the actor in socialization) must in a very important degree be a function of the fundamental role structure and dominant values of the social system.”

2. Determined Action

a. goals are established by society (institutionalization)

b. social goals become personal goals and desires (socialization)

c. individuals pursue social goals as individual goals (internalization)

d. action towards goal achievement and “personal satisfaction:

III. Functional theory of Stratification

A. Davis-Moore Theory

B. Stratification

1. structural inequality

2. universal

3. necessary

4. positive function: right people to fit social role

C. System of stratification

1. hierarchy of positions/occupations (status role complex)

2. higher positions/occupations

a. less pleasant (more work, more energy)

b. more important

1. require most talent and ability

3. rewards

a. prestige

b. high salary

* 1. leisure time

4. everyone in right place for society and place they deserve to be in.