

1. Cybernetic hierarchy of control.

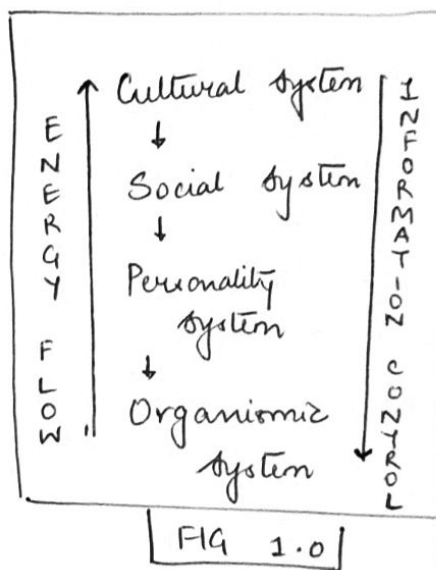
①

Talcott Parsons in his theory of 'cybernetic hierarchy of control' refers to a four-level model that describes the manner in which the complex social systems interact and operate.

The four levels are:-

① Cultural system:- Refer to values, beliefs, norms and symbols in society. Helps to understand social behaviours.

② Social system:- Refers to institutions and organizations that make the society and help in transmission and enforcement of cultural values.



③ Personality system:- Refers to individual characteristics that shape behaviour and are influenced by cultural and social systems.

④ Organismic system:- Refers to the actions and interactions of individuals within the social system.

All the four systems are linked with each other via 'Energy Flow' and 'Information Control' which Parsons calls the 'Cybernetic Hierarchy of Control'. While the cultural & social systems are high in information, the personality & organismic systems are high in energy.

Social change occurs when the equilibrium between energy and information flow is disturbed via the process of :-

- (i) Socialization :- shared values transmitted across generations including cultural, social & psychic socialization, through family, education, etc.
- (ii) Social control :- It discourages deviance & institutions like law & police enforce it. eg. POCSO Act, POSH Act, etc.

The cybernetic hierarchy operates through a process of feedback & adjustment. Feedback occurs when the behavioral outcome is different causing strain within the system leading to adjustments in the upper levels. eg. Aruna Sharbaj case & permission for passive euthanasia.

However, this theory is criticised for extreme emphasis on preserving social order and underestimation of conflict. It is called a 'veiled status quo' ideology by conflict theorists. Giddens said that his conception of a system is flawed. The theory still did not account for revolutionary change, like French Revolution.

Despite the above criticisms, Parrson's theory explained the general social actions and cultural diffusions, giving a new lease of life to structural functionalism.

2. Indian society is still in a state of transition. Using the concept of Pattern variable, account for the contradictions present in Indian society today. (20)

Indian society is in a flux where it experiences 'traditional modernity' eg. Yadan Shaadi.com as well as 'modernisation of Indian traditions' eg. Live aarti on YouTube & online prasadams, reflecting the dilemma.

Parsons' theory of pattern variables aims to show ~~that~~ the degree of modernization and the existence of duality at 5-levels, similar to Ferdinand Tönnies' Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft.

• Pattern variables and Indian contradictions:-

PVA ::	PVB
① <u>Affectivity</u> - action based on emotions, no postponement of gratification. eg. Celebrating Hardik Pandya after WC T20 win (2024) while ridiculing him earlier during IPL.	① <u>Affective neutrality</u> - separating emotions from action, postponing gratification. eg. Moving out, away from parents, for career growth and success.

② Diffusion - interaction is diffused in multiple domains, more personal
eg. Concept of 'family doctors' - who know the history of family and are personally attached.

③ Ascription - quality is evaluated based on ascriptive, inherited criteria.
eg. Pink collarization of jobs, leading to Glass Ceiling for women, Caste discrimination over use of public facilities

④ Particularism - action is decided based on a particular person, or values.
eg. Existence of Khap Panchayats and legitimisation of honour killings, Caste ~~and~~ caste

② Specificity - specific interaction over determined objective, professional
eg. Specialist hospitals with expert doctors - strictly professional relationships

③ Achievement - quality evaluated based on talent and merit.
eg. Women allowed in combat roles in defence, caste anonymity in urban areas and private sector jobs.

④ Universalism - action is based on universal values
eg. 'Rule of Law' followed by Indian judiciary as a basic feature of Constitution, leading to 'Equality before law' & 'Equal Protection of Laws'

⑤ Collective orientation -

Importance to greater good and societal well.

eg. Structurally nuclear but functioning joint families celebrating festivals and occasions together.

⑥ Self-orientation -

Importance to individual well & one's self-benefits.

eg. growth of DINK couples (Double Income No Kids) - Population of DINKs in India growing at 30% per annum (Gitnux Market Report, 2024)

The above examples highlight the stark contradictions present in the Indian society and show that India is on a 'continuum' between tradition and modernity.

Panoni' also highlights the four kinds of social structures based on different pattern variables :-

① Universalistic - achievement pattern :- It is a structure which encourages achievement based on legal rational methods and exemplifies values of equality, rationality, etc.
eg. Indian judiciary upholding Constitutionalism and values of equality & justice, irrespective of the individual's background.

- ② Universalistic - ascription pattern :- Values of legal rationality are embraced in role performance, but distribution of authority is ascriptive. eg. Only 4 out of 34 judges in Supreme Court are women, despite constituting half of the population.
- ③ Particularistic - achievement pattern :- Continuity of collectivity & selectivity with a code of propriety among those members. eg. Dalit capitalism
- ④ Particularistic - ascription pattern :- Society is traditionalistic with no incentive to disturb stability. eg. Caste endogamy

Thus, Parson's theory of pattern variables rightly justifies the state of transition in Indian society.

However, India is steadily moving towards modernization and values of equality, democracy and freedom with the advent of technology, ~~and~~ globalisation, etc. eg. Rise in inter-caste marriages, neo-local families, etc.

3. Merton's dichotomy of manifest & latent function, helps us to go beyond the common-sense perception of the world.
Discuss. (10)

Merton's 'Theory of Manifest and Latent Functions' gave a new lease of life to functionalism, by accounting for both stability and change.

His theory helps us understand the recognized as well as unrecognized functions, dysfunctions and non-functions studying the social reality in greater detail.

• Merton's theory - utility in going beyond common-sense perception :-

① Rationale behind irrational activities :- Explained through the latent functions they play.

eg. Hopi Indians' rain-making ceremony - did not make rain, but strengthened social solidarity.

② New areas of inquiry :- Opened up through greater research of latent objective consequences. eg. Bankruptcy of US airlines after 9/11 attack - latent dysfunction of attack.

③ Precludes naïve moral judgement :- Explaining the existence of apparently immoral activities. eg. Bahubali system - substitute for getting

administrative work done.

④ Help reinforce sociological theories :- eg. Oscar Lewis' theory on subculture of poverty can be further explained by its ability to provide social capital and a 'safety-net'.

⑤ However, it may sometimes also provide evidence and confirm our common sense perception. eg. A person with a criminal background will turn into a criminal - Walter Miller's theory of 'Subculture of deviance'.

Merton's theory however also has certain limitations.

• Limitations of Merton's theory :-

- ① Conflict cannot be anticipated and can only provide the dysfunctional aspect in retrospect.
- ② 'Net balance of functions' and its utility cannot be calculated without an objective yardstick.

Despite these limitations, his middle range theory certainly helped in explaining hidden social realities due to their unintended consequences (latent functions).
eg. Continuance of corruption, bureaucratic hierarchy, etc.

4. "Merton's theory of anomie is a borrowing but essentially different from that of Durkheim." Critically examine. (10)

Emile Durkheim defines anomie as a state of normative deregulation and while Merton also explains anomie, it is substantially different.

• Merton's theory of anomie :-

Merton explains anomie as the state of imbalance between culturally-determined goals and institutionally-available means. As people are differently located in society with unequal access to means, strain is created giving rise to unfulfilled aspirations, leading to anomie.

• Differences between anomie of Durkheim and Merton :-

①	DURKHEIM	MERTON
① Nature of anomie	→ <u>Contextual</u> in society, shall disappear with time.	→ <u>Permanent</u> in society, present at all times.
② Definition	→ State of <u>temporary normlessness</u>	→ State of lack of <u>coordination</u> between <u>aspirations</u> and <u>abilities</u>

③ Role of Cause of individual anomie

Rapid social change. eg. Industrial revolution in England

Over-emphasis on goals without adequate means.

④ Response of individual

May act either according to traditional or modern social norms.

May be either one of the 4. is Conformist i.e. equal in Conformist, Ritualist, Retreatist or Innovator

Merton classifies people into 4 categories on the basis of their response to anomie, also giving rise to the 'Sociology of crime and deviance'.

		Institutional means	
		+	-
Cultural goals	+	Conformist	Innovator
	-	Ritualist	Retreatist
		New Mean	
		New Goals	Revolutionist

MERTON'S THEORY OF DEVIANCE

[Fig 2.0]

Despite the above differences, both Durkheim and Merton recognise the individual reflexivity in choosing and accepting norms or displaying conformist or retreatist behaviour.

5. One of Mead's significant contributions to social psychology is his distinction between the 'I' and 'Me'. Elaborate. (10)

G.H. Mead, known as the 'Father of Symbolic Interactionism' in his book "Mind, Self and Society" rightly explains social reality in terms of interaction between individuals, mediated by symbols.

However, his theory of self and the categorization of organismic self - 'I' and social self - 'Me' helps us to understand different individual actions in different social contexts. eg. Role of Khap panchayats more in regions with greater social control, while role of formal judiciary where individuality, equality is upheld.

• Mead's Theory of Self:-

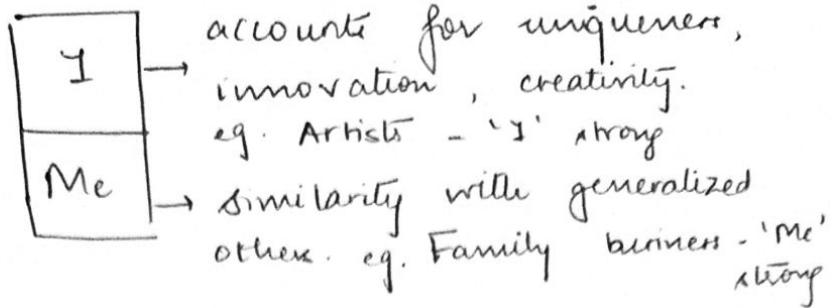
① 'I' is the psychological aspect referring to individual's own impulses, desires & emotions.

'Me' is the social aspect which is evaluative and keeps control on 'I'.

② 'I' is the source of energy while 'Me' controls the energy and channels it.

③ 'I' takes initiatives, while 'Me' evaluates it. 'I' acts, 'Me' observes.

(4)



THEORY OF SELF

FIG 3.0

⑤ Depending upon the significance of 'I' & 'Me', individual personality varies.

I	Me
---	----

→ Selfhood eg. Entrepreneurs

I	Me
---	----

→ Conformist eg. Generational occupation

I	Me
---	----

→ Deviant eg. Criminals

⑥ He also equates societal evolution with evolution of self. In simple societies, 'Me' dominates while in modern, heterogeneous societies, 'I' dominates. eg. Individualism in modern societies

His theory of self helps evaluate the degree of social control, the evolution of organismic self and the overall growth of society to accept and promote individual initiative. eg. Growth of startups show dominance of 'I'.

Thus, Mead's theory rightly conveys that "Isolated individuals & non-individual societies cannot exist." (CH Mead)

(12)