

A thick black L-shaped frame is positioned around the text. It starts at the top left, goes right, then down, then right again, forming a partial rectangular border around the central text.

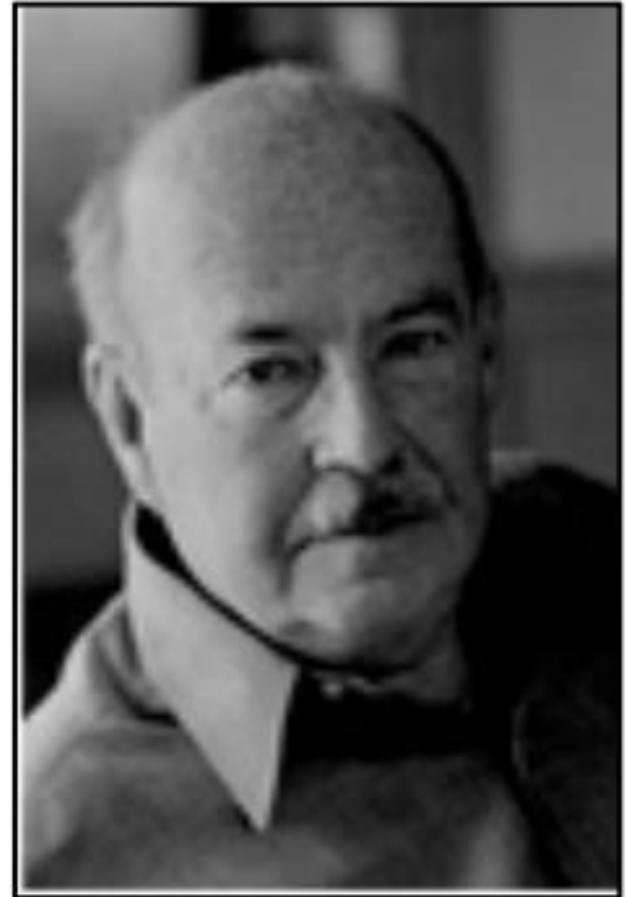
THE LANDSCAPE OF SOCIAL INCLUSION

Rachel King-Thomas
SJS14017

Structural Functionalism

- When the discipline of sociology first began Sociology and structural functionalism 'were often seen as one and the same thing' Davies (1949 *cited in* Giddens & Sutton, 2013 p.79).
- 'Society is a complex system whose various parts work together to produce stability' Giddens and Sutton (2013 p.80)
- A 'functionalist perspective [...] emphasizes the way in which the parts of a society are structured to maintain its stability' Schaefer (2013 p.13).

- Parsons believed that through socialisation accepted norms were internalised (Giddens & Sutton, 2013).
- His belief was that people conform to what is required of them and called this theory 'voluntaristic actions', the choices are voluntary but society moulds a person, Dillon (2010).
- He argued that all 'social units' could be examined and studied (Dillon, 2010).



(History Learning Site, 2018)

AGIL Schema

He believed 'the context of the social structures and the cultural values [...] invariably constrain the individual and determine all social action' Dillon (2010 p.156). He devised what he calls the AGIL Schema - Parsons believed in four basic functions that society must perform if it is to exist

- Adaptation
- Goals
- Integration
- Latent pattern-maintenance or tension management

(Dillon, 2010; Treviño, 2005).

PARSONS IDEAS

- Parsons identifies people as actors and refers to particular relationships and how that of the professional and the client has a specific role based on an 'universalistic' criteria rather than a 'particularistic' idea. The relationship between the professional and client/customer would be based on regulations or a code of practice set down by their governing bodies but none is treated as an individual (Dillon, 2010)
- Recent criticisms of the Government regarding the Windrush Generation show how this relationship is not always advantageous (Anon, 2018).

MEDIA

- Structural Functionalist - social media enforces social norms (Schaefer, 2013).
- Criticisms - Dividing society and promoting stereotyping, a misrepresentation of the reality of society (Schaefer, 2013).

CRIME

- Structural Functionalist – The lessons of ‘approved conduct’ Schaefer (2013). Parsons however asserted that crime was ‘dysfunctional’ and harmed the social system (Morgan *et al*, 2012).
- Criticisms – Different punishments according to status, failure of the criminal justice system to recognise women as victims (Schaefer, 2013).

(Daniel & Bridges, 2010; Titcomb and Carson, 2018; Touraine, 1974 *cited in* Schaefer, 2013; Gov.wales, 2017; BBC News, 2011; Theguardian.com, 2011a; Larcinese & Sircar, 2017; Theguardian.com, 2011b; Mosley and Thompson *cited in* Schaefer, 2013)

SCHOOLS

- Structural Functionalist– ‘Transmitting Culture’; ‘Promoting Social and Political Integration’; ‘Maintaining Social Control’ and ‘serving as an agent of change’ Schaefer (2013).
- Criticisms - Suppressing future generations to ensure conformity (Giddens & Sutton, 2013).

RELIGION

- Structural Functionalist - Parsons also argued that religion influences social interaction and action and is functionally necessary for socialisation (Dillon, 2010).
- Criticisms – impeding social change (Dillon, 2010).

(Daniel & Bridges, 2010; Titcomb and Carson, 2018; Touraine, 1974 *cited in* Schaefer, 2013; Gov.wales, 2017; BBC News, 2011; Theguardian.com, 2011a; Larcinese & Sircar, 2017; Theguardian.com, 2011b; Mosley and Thompson *cited in* Schaefer, 2013)

GENDER

- Structural Functionalist– Specific roles according to gender. (Giddens & Sutton, 2013).
- Criticisms – Unequal power between men and women (Schaefer, 2013).

FAMILY

- Structural Functionalist– an integral part of society promotion of the nuclear family (Dillon, 2010).
- Criticisms – the promotion of inequality within the family and the perpetuating of male dominance (Schaefer, 2013).

(Daniel & Bridges, 2010; Titcomb and Carson, 2018; Touraine, 1974 *cited in* Schaefer, 2013; Gov.wales, 2017; BBC News, 2011; Theguardian.com, 2011a; Larcinese & Sircar, 2017; Theguardian.com, 2011b; Mosley and Thompson *cited in* Schaefer, 2013)

Conclusion

- With regards to the words 'functionalism' and 'structuralism' Giddens argues 'both terms have long since lost any precise meaning' (2000 p.5)
- By the 1970s conflict theory overtook structural functionalism due to disharmony and conflict, Parsons was discredited due to his 'socially conservative' viewpoint and his favour of the 'status quo' situation Dillon (2010, p. 160). This was in part because of the many rallies that took place, in particular in America campaigning against inequality (Dillon, 2010).
- Was Parson's 'commitment to developing a broad, general and integrated theory about how society, the social system' work his downfall Dillon (2010 p. 162).
- Surely if a structural functionalist approach was not taken to society policy and legislation and possibly even sociology would not have its place so whilst critics of the structural functionalist have valid arguments a 'broad brush' approach, at least to a certain extent, must be taken if society is to continue to function.

References

- Anon, 2018. Windrush Generation Nightmare. *CTV National News - CTV Television*, pp.CTV National News - CTV Television, Apr 21, 2018.
- BBC News. (2011). *Ex-Tory peer jailed over expenses*. [online] Available at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-13599624> [Accessed 5 May 2018].
- Daniel & Bridges, 2010. The drive for muscularity in men: Media influences and objectification theory. *Body Image*, 7(1), pp.32–38.
- Dillon, Michele 1960-. *Introduction to Sociological Theory: Theorists Concepts and Their Applicability to the Twenty-first Century*. Chichester, U.K.: Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. Print.
- Giddens, A. 2000. *Central problems in social theory: action, structure and contradiction in social analysis*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

- Giddens, A. Sutton, P. *Sociology*. Cambridge: Polity, 2013. Print
- Gov.wales. (2017). *Education in Wales: Our National Mission*. [online] Available at: <https://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/170926-education-in-wales-en.pdf> [Accessed 5 May 2018].
- Larcinese & Sircar, 2017. Crime and punishment the British way: Accountability channels following the MPs' expenses scandal. *European Journal of Political Economy*, 47, pp.75–99.
- Morgan, R. et al, 2012 . *The Oxford handbook of criminology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Schaefer, R.T. 2013. *Sociology: a brief introduction*. Dubuque, IA: McGraw-Hill.
- Theguardian.com. (2011a). *Lord Taylor of Warwick and Lord Hanningfield released from jail early*. [online] Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2011/sep/12/lord-hanningfield-released-early-jail> [Accessed 5 May 2018].

- Theguardian.com. (2011b). *England riots: are harsh sentences for offenders justified?*. [online] Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2011/aug/17/england-riots-harsh-sentences-justified> [Accessed 5 May 2018].
- Titcomb, J. and Carson, J. (2018). *Fake news: What exactly is it – and how can you spot it?*. [online] The Telegraph. Available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/0/fake-news-exactly-has-really-had-influence/> [Accessed 3 May 2018].
- Treviño, A.J., 2005. Parsons's Action-System Requisite Model and Weber's Elective Affinity. *Journal of Classical Sociology*, 5(3), pp.319–348.

Image References

- Image : History Learning Site. (2018). *Functionalism - History Learning Site*. [online] Available at: <https://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/sociology/theories-in-sociology/functionalism/> [Accessed 3 May 2018].