

## UPSCprep Free Daily Answer Writing Initiative

**Subject:** Sociology

### Questions

Q1. What is the Parsonian view on social equilibrium? (10 Marks)

Q2. Critically analyse Parsons' "Pattern variables". Also, discuss how they can be used to analyse social change. (20 Marks)

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### Model Structures

**Q1. What is the Parsonian view on social equilibrium? (10 Marks)**

#### Introduction

- Define Social Equilibrium or give some brief information about Parson.

#### Main Body

- Social system - No social system in a perfect equilibrium, although a certain degree of equilibrium is essential for the survival of societies
  - This process is called as "moving equilibrium."
- AGIL schema
- Socialisation and social control -- key to maintaining social equilibrium.
  - Social control -Via formal (Law, police) and informal agencies
- Socialisation - Both by primary (Family) and secondary agencies (School, friends, society)
- Economic system - globalisation when it's introduced.
  - Latency - change in the education system needed
  - Integration - Rising individual values and family attitude changes

- Goal attainment - Income distribution must occur, or else protectionism will be on the rise.
  - Like this, if any changes in other systems, all these systems must cope; thus dynamic equilibrium occurs.
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**Q2. Critically analyse Parsons' "Pattern variables". Also, discuss how they can be used to analyse social change. (20 Marks)**

### Introduction

- Pattern variables are a standard set of variables by which a huge amount of diversity across social systems can be analysed.
- Pattern variables act as a response to the dilemma in social actions.

### Main Body

- There are in all five pattern variables, and each side of it represents one polar extreme. These pattern variables are (Explain in brief with Examples)
  - affectivity versus affective neutrality
  - universalism versus particularism
  - ascription versus achievement
  - specificity versus diffuseness
  - self-orientation versus collective orientation
- According to parson variable should be valid for all types of social actions.
- Pattern variable provide dilemmatic representation of possible social actions in the social system.
- Culture is patterned and institutionalised but culture is not a pattern in a monolithic way rather, it is a dualistic pattern. This duality of cultural pattern offers a range of choices of either this or that. This duality confronts the actors as a dilemma which the actor has to do with our culture. He identifies five levels of duality - 5 pattern variables.

### Criticism

- Person is criticized for not taking in account conflict across section that is role conflict in a society, conflict between norms and values.
- C.W. Mills criticizes parson to not take into account the role of power in determining social action.
- Devereaux criticises Parsons list of pattern variable as inadequate as there maybe many multiple types of actions.
- Marxist criticise Parsonian pattern variable for not taking into consideration the role of the economic base structure.

## Theory of social change (Pattern variable used to analyse social change)

- Traditional → Intermediate → Modern
- Simply speaking, society evolves from a traditional to a modern society via an intermediate stage.
- In a traditional society, pattern variables with more collective orientation will be predominant.
- For example, values like affectivity and ascription are given importance in a traditional society.
- Conversely, in a modern society, pattern variables that have more self-orientation will be predominant.
- For example, more importance will be given to achieved status rather than an ascribed status.
- In an intermediate society, however, one can find the presence of both kinds of pattern variables

## Conclusion:

- Parsons pattern variable provided an idea on the lines of Ideal types of Weber so as to segregate the possible social actions. These segregated action systems can further be utilised to study social phenomena in depth.

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