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Religion as Social Control: Parsons and Foucault

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ABSTRACT

In sociology and criminology, a consensus has emerged since the 1980s that there exist three basic forms of social control: informal, legal, and medical. However, Talcott Parsons developed a typology of social control that added a fourth type, namely religious control, which was needed to maintain consistency with his four-function analytical schema. In addition, since the 1980s Michel Foucault's writings on social control have grown in influence in these fields. One particular aspect of Foucault's work appears to be both complementary to and subsumable under Parsons' grand AGIL schema. This is Foucault's concept of pastoral power, whose four elements or dimensions can be understood as having functional significance for religious social control as developed by Parsons. The study of religion always brings to bear the problem of transcendence, and along the way I confront pertinent elements of idealist philosophy, and especially the phenomenology of Husserl, in this attempt to overcome some of the admitted difficulties in bringing together the thought of Parsons and Foucault.

Introduction

Social control consists of all those resources and mechanisms for assuring norm-conforming behavior (Chriss 2013). Since the 1980s, a consensus has emerged within sociology that there are three basic types of social control, namely, informal, legal, and medical. Informal social control represents the type of conformity that is produced within relationships and group living, delivered largely through a process whereby tacit norms of propriety are taught and enforced by various agents of socialization (family, friends, community, schools, and so forth). These norms are part of the unspoken and uncoded cultural background of everyday life or the lifeworld (Hechter 2018).

Whereas informal control relies on the tacit and uncoded norms of everyday life (the "ought" of morality and the expectations for conduct developed within relationships), legal control represents the textualization of those norms considered to be especially vital to the well-being of the community. By committing these norms to paper, the sentiment of the group is

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“thingified” and stands over and above members as an external constraint, which Durkheim (1893, 1984) referred to as a “social fact.” Legal norms are laws, and enforcement is not diffuse as in the case of informal control, but centralized and put into the hands of specialized agents (a constabulary force) vested with the coercive power of the state (Weber 1920, 1978).

Finally, medical control covers the realm of general behavior, with the medical specialty of psychiatry promulgating guidelines for identifying and responding to behaviors that are problematic, strange, or pathological. There is a further assumption that such odd, threatening, or strange behaviors are associated with internal pathologies indicative of mental illness or disorder. As a formal system of control and regulation, medicine has the power to label persons and their behavior as normal or deviant, which in effect thingifies vast areas of understanding much like what law accomplishes through textualization into statutes.

This tripartite classification of social control into three basic or pure types—informal, legal, and medical—elides the one system of control that is the most ancient—religion—as it is now subsumed under the broad category of informal control. Bucking the trend toward the current consensus of three types of control, Talcott Parsons had always included religion as a fourth type of control because he needed it to maintain consistency with his four-function schema, that is, AGIL (Parsons’ acronym for the four functions of adaptation, goal-attainment, integration, and latent pattern maintenance).

After a discussion of religion including a brief exposition of its conceptualization by select thinkers in sociology, theology, and philosophy, I will then summarize Parsons’ AGIL schema and explain his derivation of four basic types of control (legal, medical, informal, and religious). Once the basics of Parsons’ control scheme are in plain view, I will then move on to describe Michel Foucault’s perspective on social control, focusing on his own views on religious

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control which in many ways are compatible with those of Parsons. Indeed, the primary way that Parsons and Foucault can be brought together analytically is via their conceptualization of power. The most pertinent aspects of Foucault's thought will be derived from his discussion of pastoral power, which possesses four functional elements that align remarkably well with the four-function scheme of Parsons.

The Contemporary Relevance of Parsons

The issue of the waxing, waning, and resurgence of Parsons' influence in sociology and across the social sciences should be noted. Parsons' major writings first appeared in the late 1930s, and through the 1940s and 1950s Parsons was arguably the most famous and influential sociologist in the world (Bourricaud 1984). It was also during these two decades that the functionalist systems theory emerged and was continually refined, for example, with the addition of the cybernetic principle which clarified the relationship between the four functions themselves (to be discussed more fully below). The tumultuous 1960s, which fundamentally challenged the status quo and directed withering critiques against guardians of the old order, also ushered in challenges to the leading authorities in numerous fields of study, including against Parsons as the leading world sociologist (see, e.g., Gouldner 1970, Friedrichs 1970).

Rather quickly, however, a generally sympathetic resurgence and rethinking of Parsons' AGIL schema appeared beginning in the 1980s, embodied most importantly in the emergence of the neofunctionalist movement led by such thinkers as Jeffrey Alexander (1983), Niklas Luhmann (1982), and David Sciulli (see Sciulli and Gerstein 1985). For the most part, this neofunctionalist movement retained the core features of Parsonian structural-functionalism while differentially emphasizing or modifying various aspects of it. For example, Alexander chose to refine and elevate the role of culture within the AGIL schema, while Luhmann argued that

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structural elements are more crucial than functional elements with regard to sociological explanation generally and to differentiation specifically (Scott 2012, p. 82).

This sympathetic reengagement with Parsons has continued to the present day. For example, just since the year 2000 there have been no less than twelve scholarly monographs published dedicated to various aspects of Parsons' work (see, e.g., Hart 2010; Pollini and Sciortino 2001; Treviño 2016), including numerous additional scholarly articles. These works attest to the continuing viability of Parsons' analytical approach for sociological theory generally and for specialist and applied areas including medicine, religion, law, power, and of course social control.

Within the sociology of religion specifically, Rodney Stark (2004) has articulated a general condemnation of sociologists of religion uncritically genuflecting to the "big three" classics of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim. This critique has merit, because such genuflection marks a blind commitment to thought which becomes doctrinaire, in the process turning theory into dogma guarded by a vanguard party (namely, the paradigm or theory group; see Gouldner 1974). This, in effect, closes off honest and open scholarly debate which is or should be the lifeblood of science. Stark's (2001) specific condemnation of the field's Durkheim worship pulls in a critique of functionalism to the extent that Durkheim argued that religion sustains the moral order. This is an overly broad and hence indefensible argument, as Stark reminds us to go back to the scholarship of Tylor and Spencer (among others) who find evidence that only some types of religion under certain specifiable conditions produce moral solidarity.

Durkheim's mistake was that he took for granted that, especially in primitive society with its high degree of cultural homogeneity and like-mindedness, there was a strong collective conscience that kept everyone in line primarily through the threat of harsh and retributive

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punishments for those who violated the tacit moral order. But later, by the time he wrote his first book, *The Structure of Social Action*, Parsons (1937) had noticed that Durkheim had lapsed into the error of positing a transcendental social mind bearing down upon its hapless subjects.

Noticing this as a critical aside only in passing initially, it took Parsons several more decades to refine the functionalism handed down to him from Durkheim, Malinowski, and Radcliffe-Brown to tease out the existence of a telic system—the realm of ultimate values typically informed by a religious ethos—which need never posit the kind of lower-level or empirical uniformities previously and presumably connected to it travelling under a social mind idea. Parsons was able to guard against the criticisms Stark leveled against Durkheim's functionalism through the developed of a multidimensional analytical framework that uncouples or unlinks conceptual levels—namely, the idea of functional autonomy—via cybernetics (Alexander 1982), the details of which will be discussed below.

Parsons: Functionalism and Social Control

Social control emerged as a unifying topic and research agenda for sociology in the late 19th century. This coincided with the institutionalization of sociology in the United States largely through the efforts of such pioneers as Lester Ward, Franklin Giddings, and Albion Small.

Included in this group of early American sociologists was Edward A. Ross (1901), who was the primary innovator of the concept of social control, even as it was refined and expanded over the next several decades with the writings of European contributors, especially those of Durkheim and Weber (Chriss 2019).

Talcott Parsons combined the concern with deviance and social control reflective of the trend of development within American sociology on the one hand, with the broader question of social order typical of European sociologists such as Pareto, Weber, and Durkheim, on the other.

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For example, in his 1937 book *Structure of Social Action*, Parsons argued that there was a convergence of thought between four European social thinkers—the aforementioned Pareto, Weber, and Durkheim along with the economist Alfred Marshall—which represented a decisive break from the then dominant utilitarian tradition of explaining human action in strictly instrumental, rational terms (Parsons 1937). Durkheim was especially important to this portion of Parsons’ argument, namely, his critique of the blind spots in utilitarianism.

Parsons noted that in *Suicide* Durkheim extended the critique of utilitarianism which he had earlier elaborated on in *Division of Labor*, especially in terms of the utilitarian claim that the burgeoning division of labor would bring a concomitant increase in economic progress which in turn would result in generally higher levels of societal “happiness” (Parsons 1974). But Durkheim was struck immediately by the fact that newly industrialized societies seemed to be experiencing higher, not lower, levels of suicide. As Parsons (1974: lv) explains, “This was clearly an anomaly from the point of view of utilitarian theory and stimulated Durkheim to a major, if not complete, theoretical reconstruction in his classic monograph *Suicide*.” Through this analysis Durkheim was thus able to undermine the utilitarian notion of suicide as being merely a pathology of the instrumental system; instead, suicide’s explanation resides within the collective normative system.

Parsons felt that positivistic science had in effect squeezed the subjective—that is, the normative or nonrational—element out of theoretical consideration altogether, and he went on to show that each theorist (Durkheim, Weber, Pareto, and Marshall) had incorporated this heretofore missing normative element into their theories in order to explain how social order is possible. Building upon Durkheim’s notion of the non-contractual element of contract—namely, the existence of tacit norms of agreement to enter into contractual relations in the first place—Parsons argued that the explanation for the existence of such non-contractual relationships in

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modern society must lie in the common “value-elements” that people share. Thus, it is Durkheim’s notion of a shared moral community which allows Parsons to solve the Hobbesian problem of order that had vexed western philosophy since the 17th century. This is, in essence, the heart of Parsons’ early formulation of his “voluntaristic theory of action” which appeared in *The Structure of Social Action*. At least in the early parts of *Structure*, Parsons is determined to rescue human action from both behaviorism (on the non-cognitive side) and utilitarianism (on the cognitive side), and to establish the significance of subjectivity for social theory (Camic 1989).

Even with his emphasis on voluntarism and the “subjective point of view,” however, Parsons is by no means a mere idealist. Parsons attempted to avoid the solipsism of Hegelian idealism while guarding against materialist appropriations (by Marx and others) which may lead to such political dead ends as fascism and communism (see Gerhardt 1996). For Parsons, the building block of the structure of social action is the *unit act*. The unit act consists of (1) an actor or actors, (2) pursuing a goal or goals, (3) in a social situation, (4) guided by an overarching value framework which provides direction as to selection from various means available for pursuing the particular goal or goals (Parsons 1937: 43-51). In order to avoid the problem of psychological reductionism, Parsons could not allow persons (actors) to be the basic unit of action systems. There must be something added beyond or above the level of the individual, and this reflects Durkheim’s notion of the emergent or *sui generis* nature of social reality.

These four elements of the unit act—actor, means, goals, and situation—are also the basis of Parsons’ later, mature structural-functionalist theory (namely, AGIL) as mentioned above. Actors (representing the A or adaptation function) operate in physical environments pursuing

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goals (representing G or goal-attainment), the activities of which are embedded in a social situation (representing the I or integrative function) and informed by a tacit, taken-for-granted horizon of possibilities (culture and the lifeworld), the value-orientations of which help the actor match those means most salient to the goals being pursued within the situation at hand.

These value-orientations are not set in stone, that is, they are not purely empirical or natural phenomena, but arise out of the give-and-take of social actors in lifeworlds pursuing goals constrained by both physical and social (that is, structural or institutional) realities. Parsons' idea concerning the possibility of various value-orientations becoming salient in particular social, historical, cultural, and situational settings is informed most directly by Weber's (1920, 1978) methodological and epistemological championing of empathic understanding (*Verstehen*). It is this attempt to coordinate norms and values (the ideational) with actors moving about and operating across space and time (the material) which, Parsons argues, is compatible with the phenomenology of Husserl and as imported into sociology by Alfred Schütz.

Indeed, Parsons (1937: 733) sees parallels between his own action frame of reference and phenomenology, insofar as it is the "indispensable logical framework" in which theorists describe and think about the phenomena of human action. The action frame of reference then has, following Edmund Husserl, a "phenomenological" status. But from the perspective of Husserl and by extension Schütz, like most other social scientists Parsons has unwittingly naturalized consciousness, subjectivity, and objectivity because he never sought to achieve the transcendental epoché, that is, he did not sufficiently guard against importing perspectives from the naïve natural surrounding world (or the lifeworld) into his so-called scientific concepts (see Grathoff 1978). This confusion on the part of conventional philosophers, psychologists, and scientists is, according to Husserl (1970), leading inexorably to the crisis of the sciences writ

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large. Even so, how is anyone to achieve this transcendental reduction and know that the results are authentic? Husserl (1997) muddies the waters with his own admonition that the achievement of any epoché in the transcendental reduction can be merely partial or conditional, whereby the attempt to return to the self in its absolute proper essentialism—that is, a true phenomenological reduction—may actually simply be a conventional psychological reduction which is of course necessary for the positive scientist (for example, by way of the usage of abstract principles of mathematics to achieve things in the world). Husserl and later Schütz seem to be following the mysterious transcendental phenomenology of Hegel in discussing the lifeworld as a “becoming” which possesses multiple segments or structures in relation to the “givenness” or “taken-for-grantedness” of the natural attitude of laypersons and nonphenomenological scientists. This is why, presumably, there are available any number of reductions, most of which do not meet the requirements of a true phenomenological reduction (see Schütz and Luckman 1973).

In this movement from the phenomenological and the philosophical into the sociological, and especially with reference to Parsons’ functionalism, there is no imperative of stopping to deal with the disputes and critiques attending to the action frame of reference and the ontological status of the four functions beyond simply acknowledging their existence. However, it is worth keeping in mind that at any point in the continuing development of the discussion of the conceptualization of religion as a type of social control—indeed, the premier early form of control—such background issues can become salient. In the hands of Parsons and other sociologists, the conceptualization of deviance and social control “breaks free” from the entrapment in questions of phenomenology, consciousness, objectivity, subjectivity, and transcendence, even as linking religion to social control brings back the latter elements with a

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vengeance. For now, though, let us examine the genesis of Parsons' conceptualization of social control and the place of religion within it.

Parsons and the AGIL Schema

Within the action frame of reference, the point of view of various aspects of the unit act can take precedent. With respect to both deviance and social control, the point of reference can be either individual actors involved in a situation (where the function of adaptation would prevail), or the interaction system involving a plurality of actors (here, the function of integration would prevail). From the perspective of the actor, deviance would amount to that actor acting in ways that contravenes one or several institutionalized normative patterns (whether of those developed within the lifeworld, the legal system, religion, or medicine). On the other hand, from the perspective of the interaction system, the focus would be on several actors acting in such a way as to upset the equilibrium (whether static or moving) of the typically stable interaction process (Parsons 1951: 250). In general, then, social control is a reaction to deviance, with the goal of restoring equilibrium of the system and/or attending to the individuals involved in the disruption, often through application of sanctions in proportion to the level and severity of the disruption caused.¹ These sanctions could appear in the form of, for example, counseling, ostracization, avoidance, withholding of expected rewards, interrogation, therapy, or other more coercive measures such as detainment, segregation, isolation, incarceration, and physical assault up to and including death.

¹ Here Parsons (1951: 206) states "A mechanism of social control, then, is a motivational process in one or more individual actors which tends to counteract a tendency to deviance from the fulfillment of role-expectations, in himself or in one or more alters. It is a re-equilibrating mechanism."

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Parsons (1964: 269-273) later expanded upon this provisional distinction between person and situation, identifying two distinct analytical axes with two poles each, hence producing four possible outcomes and thereby aligning with the four-function schema. These two axes of differentiation are (1) persons or groups, and (2) situational focus or normative focus. With respect to (1), the problem of deviance can be interpreted in the following two ways. First, it could be interpreted as lying within the person him- or herself, that is, as a disturbance of the total person. This is the person side of the person-group axis. Second, there could be a disturbance in the person's relation to the value-orientations of a particular collectivity (or group), which emphasizes a relational problem interpreted as deviance rather than focusing on a disturbance which is said to be characteristic of the total person which need not refer to anything outside him or her.

With respect to (2), this axis differentiates between foci of situation and norm. Here, there is differentiation in terms of orientation to the exigencies of a situation in which a person must act, on the one hand, or in terms of orientation to or through salient normative patterns, on the other. Hence, the four possibilities produced through the combining of the two axes are (a) person-situational focus; (b) person-normative focus; (c) group-situational focus; (d) group-normative focus. Let us now examine how Parsons assigns four distinct types of social control to these four outcomes.

First, in (a) we have a disturbance of the total person in a particular situation. This for Parsons is the problem of diminished mental or physical capacities for the particular tasks or role performances at hand. Here, the deviance case is illness and the conformity case is health, which falls under the auspices of *medical control*. Second, in (b) we have a disturbance of the total person in relation to a normative focus, which Parsons interprets as a problem of commitments to

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values, that is, a failure to act morally. Here, the deviance case is immorality and specifically sin, while the conformity case is grace or good character, which indicates that this falls under the auspices of *religious control*.

Third, in (c) we have a disturbance of a particular collectivity's or group's value-orientation in relation to a situation. This is the problem of commitments to groups (especially those of solidarity relations within primary group settings). Here, the deviance case is disloyalty and the conformity case is loyalty, which indicates that this falls under the auspice of *informal control*. Fourth, in (d) we have a disturbance of particular group expectations with regard to a normative focus. This is the problem of commitment to norms, and Parsons defines these as legal norms or laws. The deviance case is crime or illegality, while the conformity case is law observance, which places this under the auspice of *legal control*.

The Cybernetic Principle

To summarize, Parsons posits four basic types of social control, namely, informal, legal, medical, and religious. Once this conceptual groundwork is in place, it is also possible to assign functions to the four types of social control. In his later work, utilizing Norbert Wiener's (1948) concept of cybernetics, Parsons developed an explanation for the ordering of the relationship between the four functions.² The cybernetic principle, whereby things high in information control things high in energy, operates across all levels of physical and social reality and provides the key operational "glue" for maintaining relations of elements within any system.

² See Parsons (1970) for an explanation of the place of cybernetics within the development of his systems theory.

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Think of the helmsman steering a ship through the water, or a rider on horseback, or a thermometer controlling the temperature of a room. The elements high in information (the helmsman, the rider, the thermostat) steer lower-level elements that are high in energy toward desired ends. For example, over the course of human development there is posited a continual growth in reason and enlightenment whereby primordial passions—the engine of all sentient life—are subdued and channeled into socially-approved forms, reflected in the modernist sentiment “head over heart.” Further, cybernetics assumes that human and nonhuman organizations constitute systems which are goal-seeking, and which attempt to maintain equilibrium or one particular state, such as the thermostat maintaining the room’s temperature at 68 degrees (Deutsch 1963: 195).

If indeed all systems must solve the four functional problems of adaptation, goal-attainment, integration, and latent pattern-maintenance, then perhaps the functions themselves exist in a hierarchical relationship to one another. By the time of his last great work, “A Paradigm of the Human Condition,” Parsons (1978: 352-433) had extended his AGIL schema to the cosmos and beyond. It was truly close to something like a string theory for sociology, for Parsons suggested that everything from the vast infinity of the cosmos down to the molecular level of organic life could be accounted for in the AGIL schema. The “human condition” now stands at the grandest and most abstract level of the analytical system (see Figure 1).

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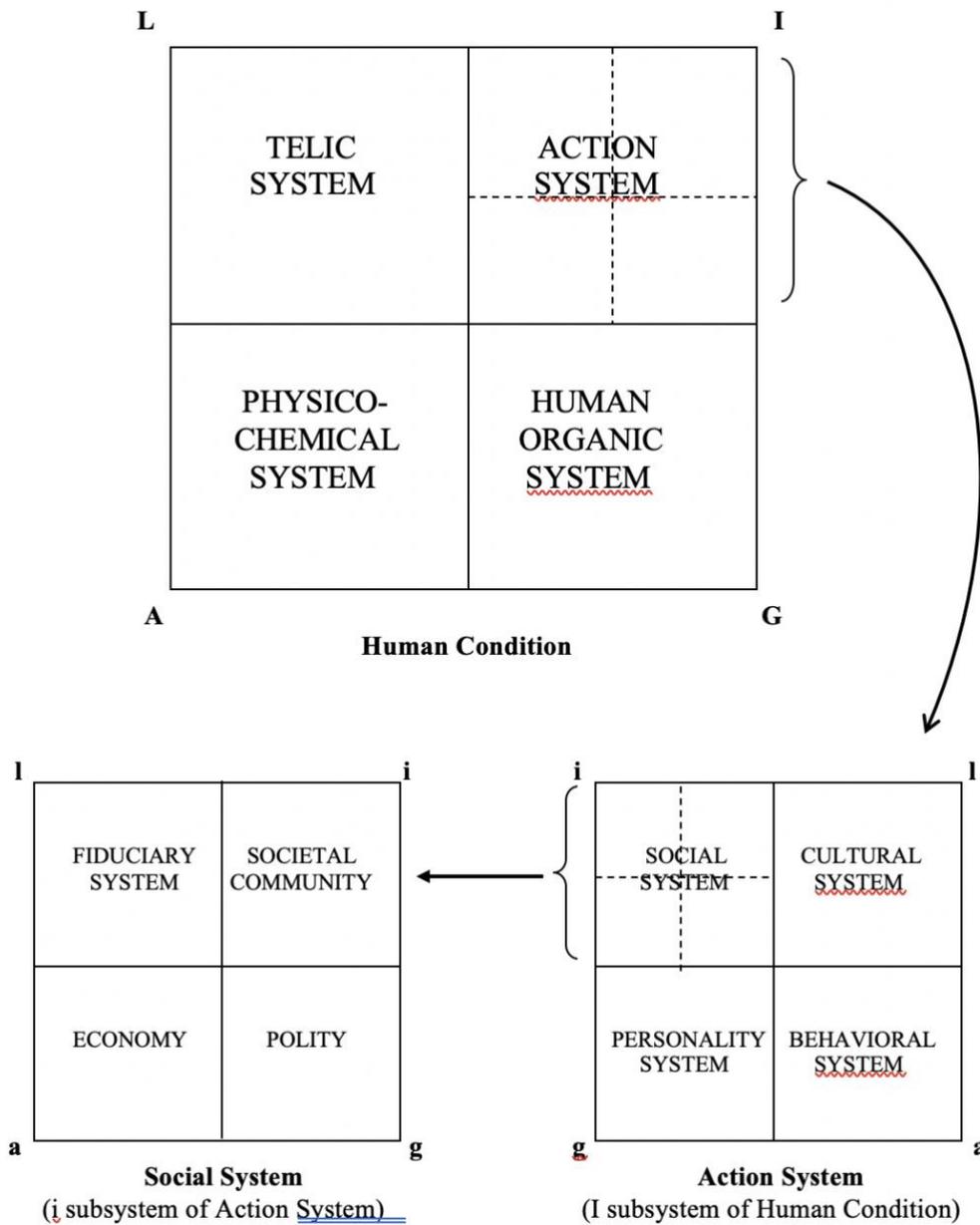


Figure 1. General Paradigm of the Human Condition and Selected Subsystems

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The A subsystem represents the raw material of organic and inorganic life, the so-called physico-chemical system. In the G subsystem the raw material from the A level is organized into human organic life, or the human organism. The action subsystem of the general paradigm of the human condition fulfills the integrative (I) function because human interaction necessarily takes place within environments which include other action systems—that is, other human beings and their symbolically- meaningful behavior—as well as nonaction environments, such as the telic system and the lower physico-chemical and human organic systems (Toby 1977). It is by necessity the integrative framework of action within which human actors in situations, guided by shared symbolic systems, are able to coordinate and integrate their own and others' actions across space and time and to understand these as *meaningful* actions or behaviors. As Parsons (1977: 178) explains, the aspects of behavior which directly concern “cultural-level” systems—as opposed to physico-chemical, organic, or telic levels—count as *action*. And further, “An action system’s primary integrative problem is the coordination of its constituent units, in the first instance human individuals, though for certain purposes collectivities may be treated as actors” (Parsons 1971: 5).

Finally, the L subsystem is termed the telic system, and this is the environment of true finality, the realm of ultimate values where human beings posit the existence of a deity, thereby helping them reach out to the stars and beyond. It is the realm of the nonempirical. As Parsons (1978: 356) explains, “It is primarily within the religious context that throughout so much of cultural history belief in some kind of ‘reality’ of the nonempirical world has figured prominently.” In suggesting that religious values, that is, existential questions of ultimate meaning, stand at the pinnacle of the cybernetic hierarchy insofar as they provide pattern-maintenance and tension management functions for the whole of human society, Parsons has

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been criticized by some for a conservative bias and insensitivity to social change in seeming to favor the sacred over the profane (see, e.g., Bellah 1970). But Parsons consistently warned about confusing the highly general and abstract analytical distinctions he was making by way of the four function and cybernetic schema with any particular concrete social system. As Lidz (1982: 293) explains, one must distinguish between the symbolic levels of religious beliefs, representations, or images from the actual action systems that emerge to sustain them in any particular case: “The former stand at the peak of the cybernetic hierarchy because they provide highly generalized criteria for resolving the normative dilemmas confronting all action systems, something that even great quantities of any resource (wealth, power, intelligence, whatever) cannot do.”

The four subsystems represent the most general level possible for purposes of social analysis, in that there is a physical or chemical realm, an organic realm, an action realm, and a nonempirical realm. If one begins at this most abstract level, the paradigm of the human condition, one may then descend to lower analytical levels by way of any selected subsystem. For example, returning to Figure 1, the I subsystem of the human condition, namely the action system, can be decomposed into its own subsystems (depicted in the box on the bottom right portion of the figure), each serving one of the four functions of AGIL. One may then continue on and select one of these subsystems (the social system as shown in Figure 1) which again decomposes into a still lower level subsystem (the box on the bottom left), and so on.

Parsons argued that, with regard to the frame of reference of the general action system, the cultural system (L) stands at the pinnacle of the cybernetic hierarchy, because it is high in information and “controls” virtually everything connected with the meaningful and purposive

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behavior of human beings.³ With the function of latent pattern maintenance standing at the top of the cybernetic hierarchy, the next level down is the function of integration (I), which at the frame of reference of the general action system is represented by the social system itself. Culture in a sense is the ultimate and most generalized medium of interchange which circulates throughout the social system, and the social system itself represents the most general but nevertheless concrete patterning of human energy. Social systems, in effect, represent the integration of human beings moving about in space and time.

The next level down in the cybernetic hierarchy of control is the function of goal-attainment (G), and with regard to the frame of reference of the general action system, this is represented by the human personality. The human personality represents the integration of need-dispositions, this being accomplished as a result of the human organism's experiencing the socialization process, whereby he or she learns a particular set of cultural norms, values, and standards. Finally, at the lowest level of the cybernetic hierarchy stands the function of adaptation (A), which is represented by the behavioral system, or simply, the human being him- or herself. When a baby is born, he or she is a blank slate which, although high in energy, has no guidelines for organizing or directing his or her behavior. Only with socialization can a cultural code be internalized and integrated into the personality.

Hence, we see Parsons applying the principles of cybernetics to explain the human action system, and how information and feedback mechanisms provide modifications and growth of

³ Culture, in this sense, is to the social system what DNA is to the organism. DNA, which is high in information, "controls" the constitution, makeup, and appearance of the organism (ontogeny). Additionally, DNA is, like culture, passed down from generation to generation as organisms procreate and pass on their genetic heritage to offspring (phylogeny).

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both human beings themselves and the social systems which evolve from their concerted actions and interactions. Culture, high in information and serving the function of pattern maintenance (L), is passed down to the human child who is high in energy and who through his or her behavior adapts (A) to the environment and responds to a variety of stimuli as he or she goes through the socialization process. The behavioral system of the child gets organized one level higher up when the personality is formed through ongoing socialization, as the child's behavior is channeled toward the seeking of certain goals or end states (G) appropriate to the social context and the prevailing cultural heritage. Finally, the activities of each person, endowed with personalities which direct them toward the attainment of certain goals, create a tapestry of interlocking role relationships which produces the patterned regularities which we know as social institutions and, ultimately, social systems (I). This process is depicted in Figure 2.

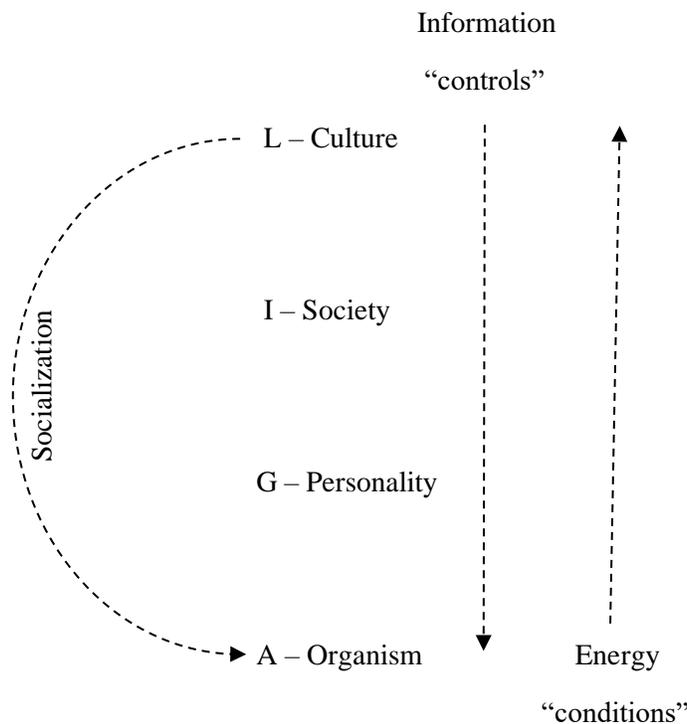


Figure 2. Cybernetic Hierarchy of the General Action System

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Functions and Four Types of Control

We may now examine the implications of the cybernetic hierarchy of control for organizing our understanding of the four types of social control and their assigned functions. The direction of control among the functions, viewed relationally according to the cybernetic principle, are latent pattern-maintenance => integration => goal-attainment => adaptation. The realm of control that is highest in energy relative to the other realms is medical control, and this concerns the mental or physical capacities of the person being at sufficient levels to allow performance of roles.

When capacities are diminished, the person is considered ill and rather than punishment, therapy or treatment is considered the appropriate sanction in that, for the most part, the ill are not held accountable for their condition. Hence, even though illness is a form of deviance, since the ill state is not volitional or voluntary, punishment would be inappropriate. Hence, medical control fulfills the function of adaptation (A) for the social control system.⁴

Law is the premier formalized set of norms which are textualized, that is, committed to paper. Laws attain statutory authority as backed by the coercive power of a constabulary force in a legal jurisdiction, and thereby are differentiated from the norms of everyday life or the lifeworld. Because laws emanate (largely) from the legislative branch of government at various levels (federal, state, county, and municipal), they are given life and “thingified” by the

⁴ It is not accurate to speak of a “social control system” per se, as there is no distinct social control subsystem within the social system that is located independently of other institutional, cultural, or structural concerns. As socialization is a system parsed out across many actors and institutions, so too social control consists of multiple parallel projects of norm enforcement across the social system. For each of the four types of social control, the best we can do is alert the reader to the location or the seating of the social control function located within various subsystems related to medicine, law, everyday life, and religion.

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appropriation of power, the delinguistified medium of interchange seated in the polity which circulates throughout the social system. Law, then, uses power in an attempt to steer persons to pursue goals that are defined as legal or legitimate, using strong inducements such as the threat of arrest or incarceration if criminal laws are violated. With regard to social control, then, legal control fulfills the function of goal-attainment (G).

Much of social control operates informally, as part of the background understandings we all hold as a result of living and growing up in a community and being influenced by any number of agents of socialization (family members, friends, schools, neighbors, and so forth) to act according to tacit standards of proper conduct in everyday life (or, as the phenomenologists prefer, the lifeworld). Persons, only in their capacity as fellow human beings, and by way of relationships and group living, teach these norms of propriety (the “ought” of morality) to members of the group and use informal sanctions (the silent treatment, avoidance, smiles or glares, etc.) when violations occur. These norms are tacit and uncoded, as opposed to textualized and backed by a constabulary force as in the case of laws. The norms of everyday life operate as part of the tacit, unthematized cultural horizons of the lifeworld, and the circulating medium seated here is influence, with the ultimate goal of the integration of members in solidarity with one another (such as in the strong bonding and expressive orientations that take place in the primary groups of families and friends). Hence, informal control fulfills the function of integration (I) according to Parsons’ AGIL analytic.

For most scholars working in the area of social control, the “ought” of morality within informal control would encompass religion and the solidarity of the congregation brought about by a shared orientation toward the sacred. But as we have discussed above, Parsons cannot let religion be absorbed into informal control because he needs four distinct types of control to align

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with the four-function schema. The way Parsons pulls off this analytical sleight of hand is described in the discussion above, with the two prominent axes being: (b) person-normative focus and (c) group-situational focus. To summarize, the group-situational dimension (c) gives us informal control, while the person-normative dimension (b) gives us religious control. Informal control deals with a disturbance of group expectations within a situational focus, whereas religious control deals with a disturbance of the total person within a normative focus.

To clarify, from the perspective of Parsons, informal control becomes salient to the extent that social situations are always “phenomenological” and “transcendent”—that is, always beyond the reach of solitary actors even as they are immersed in social settings—insofar as the focus is on the reality of living in a lifeworld among fellow human beings. Hence when deviance occurs within the group-situational foci, such violations of conduct are not in the first instance traceable to defects in the self but instead threaten the solidarity of the group. The analytical treatment of religious control, on the other hand, utilizes alternate foci which in effect “teases out” different explanatory implications for the observer looking down upon the social system. Religious control shifts over to the person-normative dimension whereby Parsons, drawing directly from Weber, observes that organized religions are a type of imperatively-coordinated association (ICA)—namely hierocratic organizations—which enforce order “...through psychic coercion by distributing or denying religious benefits” (Weber [1920] 1978: 54). Because religion encompasses the realm of ultimate values, the disturbance of the total person—a solitary and identifiable member of the flock of true believers who has gone astray—amounts to a failure to comport his or her behavior to the scriptures, thereby reducing or eliminating access to salvation because of an immorality which, in the religious context, is sin. The psychic nature of religious coercion—denial of salvation, an eternal afterlife spent in Hell—places emphasis on the total

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person under the scrutiny of an ever-watchful creator along with the ministrations of a priest and the normative focus on correct living according to scripture and the commandments. In addition, among the four types of control, religious control sits at the pinnacle of the cybernetic hierarchy as it is highest in information relative to the others. Specifically, the cybernetic hierarchy goes in the direction of: religious control (L) => informal control (I) => legal control (G) => medical control (A).

Enter Foucault

It is now time to describe how Michel Foucault's view of social control can be brought into alignment with Parsons and, indeed, how certain elements of Foucault's thoughts on religion can be incorporated into Parsons' four-function (or AGIL) framework. Interestingly, both Parsons and Foucault hold to a decentered conceptualization of power, as both tend to view it as a circulating medium coursing through the social system with variable but predictable effects. Furthermore, power is not a finite resource but goes through periods of inflation and deflation, much like other symbolic media of interchange Parsons has identified such as money, influence, libido energy, affect, and value commitments (Chriss 2016). Where they differ is that Parsons identifies a home base where power is anchored, and that is in the polity, although it emanates from there and flows throughout the system producing effects in its wake. Foucault, on the other hand, conceptualizes no home base, no anchoring within any particular subsystem for power. Hence, there is somewhat of an ambivalence between the structuralism of Parsons and the post-structuralism of Foucault (see Heiskala 2001, Torfing 2013).

There is also some confusion between, on the one hand, viewing power as exclusively "power over," that is, S who possesses power dominates and oppressing T who has much less power relative to S, a view traceable to Machiavelli and Hobbes. In the move to modernity and

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the emphasis placed on legal-bureaucratic rationality, government functionaries are endowed with the coercive power of the state and when push comes to shove, it is government powerholders (police, prosecutors, judges, social workers, psychiatrists, public health officials) whose definition of the situation wins out against hapless citizens. Parsons himself sometimes lapsed into this absolutist view of power informed by the elite theory of the state (Pareto, Mosca, and Michels), as reflected in the criticisms of Gouldner, Mills, and others (see, e.g., Christensen 2013; Gouldner 1970; Mészáros 1989; Mills 1959).

Yet within democracies and constitutional republics power is dispersed more broadly across the citizenry, primarily by way of the right to vote and the system of representational democracy whereby legislators' votes reflect the will of their constituents. This makes power less a zero-sum game than is found in totalitarian or kingship systems of government, and both Parsons and Foucault subscribe to this same idea, namely that because S holds power this does not necessarily mean that T is deprived of his or her fair share. Indeed, because of the more equitable distribution of power characteristic of western constitutionalism, the citizenry can engage in multiple and parallel projects of power, emphasizing the multilateral concept of "power to" which thereby supplements the earlier unilateral or bilateral "power over" (Dean 2013).

Although their shared rejection of the zero-sum concept of power is important, Parsons and Foucault also display affinities to functional analysis, with of course Parsons doing this explicitly while Foucault's functionalism is implicit or certainly more subtle. It is sometimes the case that observers who claim Foucault is a functionalist do so in an effort to cast aspersions against Foucault because they (the observers) find functionalism unpalatable. For example, Gilles Deleuze describes how Foucault conceptualizes power not in the traditional sense of its

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being a resource that holders can possess to get things done in the world, but as a project or a strategy by which ends are pursued via the selection of any number of means including techniques, discourses, maneuvers, dispositions, and alliances.

Power, then, is a process which can only be understood in relation to the points through which it passes, which is similar in ways to the concept of existential and phenomenological “becoming” from Hegel to Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty (1968) to name a few. In other words, the play of power—especially that which is on public display emanating from the state and from experts who successfully couple knowledge to power via disciplinary authority—can be resisted and countered in multiple ways and via innumerable projects by private citizens (Foucault 1979, 1990). Even so, Deleuze (1988: 26) describes Foucault’s work here as a “new functionalism” which amounts to a “...new topology which no longer locates the origins of power in a privileged place,” but which is dispersed to multiple localities where projects are taken up as needed and defined within the private realm. This new microfunctionalism replaces the Marxist concept of the bourgeois cultural superstructure of western capitalism with a strict immanence constituting a field or social space within which disciplinary power is not only deployed against the populace but can be utilized by members for whatever purposes they deem viable, beneficial, or necessary (Deleuze 1988: 27). In agreement with Deleuze, Brenner (1994: 702) argues that “Foucault described power and resistance solely as conglomerations of functions, without reference to the projects, strategies, and experiences of the human agents which ‘inhabit’ or ‘bear’ them.” This immanence linking the system to the lifeworld via subsystems connected by way of inputs and outputs of resources and circulating media is close to the AGIL framework of Parsons.

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The crucial thing to observe here is that Foucault accepts the socialization theories of Durkheim, Freud, and Parsons regarding the attainment of norm-conformity and social order within any society. Here, then, power works subtly as internalized within the personality to create the need-dispositions necessary to be accepted as a fully-ratified participant in social gatherings (with regard to the lifeworld and informal control) as well as a legitimate citizen within a political jurisdiction. When socialization works according to plan, there is less need of outright coercive force to maintain the peace and produce conformity. By way of Weber, Parsons acknowledged that although political legitimacy flows in the first instance from the state, the socialization system—including the open invitation for all citizens to maintain the peace through watchful oversight of family, friends, and neighbors (governmentality)—is the more impressive and effective guarantor of social order because of the consensus presumably forged over the desirability and even goodness of that order. Hence, although Foucault is widely considered a radical or critical theorist, in many respects his theory of power “duplicated Parsons’s treatment of power” (B. Turner 2018: 10).

Pastoral Power at the Collège de France

Foucault gave a series of lectures at the Collège de France in 1978. Titled “Security, Territory, Population,” the lectures were translated into English and published in 2007. Foucault’s goal is to decenter power itself, that is, by freeing relations of power from institutional settings in order to view power-in-action in its purest form, as techniques or strategies persons employ in various settings. By doing this, Foucault also believes that by treating instances of power use through techniques and strategies, along the way being blind to their institutional basis and/or emanation, he can distinguish them from their functions (Foucault, 2007: 118). Foucault is suggesting that

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functions make sense only in relation to structural embeddedness, for example, explaining the function of the heart in relation to particular ends it fulfills for the body. Parsons is of course alive to this issue as well, noting that structure is the “static” aspect of explanation while function is the “dynamic” aspect insofar as there is a desire to explain what various features (structures) of the totality do or perform (functions) for the system. In recommending structural-functionalism for sociological analysis, Parsons viewed “function” as the key concept for understanding static structures in relation to dynamic variability within social systems (McKinney 1954: 574). In any system, there are both uniformities and dynamic processes at play, and the goal is to ascertain the functional significance of various structures for maintaining the whole (Parsons 1951: 20-22). Parsons is unwilling to decouple structure and function in the way described by Foucault, and in fact, Foucault cannot magically eliminate the question of functional significance of structural elements merely by definitional fiat or other verbal gymnastics.

There is another element to Foucault’s strategy which must be considered. Foucault admits that institutional sites—schools, prisons, courtrooms, mental hospitals, legislative chambers—are aspects of the political authority of a society whose effects are felt far and wide. But these emanating effects can and do travel further and further from the main centers as persons engage in various local projects utilizing techniques, strategies, and discourses—including those of resistance—as they see fit. Foucault believes that the further removed such local projects of humanity are from their embeddedness in public institutions, the purer in form such uses of power become and hence can be understood and explained more clearly. This is similar to the strategy of Emile Durkheim (1915, 1968), who believed that one cannot adequately study religion in its modern trappings but must go back to its simpler and presumably purer form in the guise of totemism practiced by primitive tribes. But Parsons also subscribes to the idea

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that the authority structures and socialization processes do not reach all levels of social reality or all elements of the system evenly. Indeed, because of the differences in psychological endowment and placement in the social structure (among other factors), differential socialization produces uneven and unanticipated effects. For Parsons (1968: 329), social control is that feature of human social systems which seeks to minimize the discrepancies between the expectations system and actual behavior, and this position is consistent with the one Foucault has staked out.

Foucault (2007: 121) notes the etymology of the word “govern” which, although typically referring to maintaining direction down or toward a certain path, could also imply subsistence, such as someone who is of “excessive government,” meaning that they consume too much or are difficult to support. In its later, more conventional usage, government refers to the supervision of persons, places, or events on the basis of some authority which is viewed as legitimate to stand over and tend to such areas. For example, priests are concerned with the government of souls, doctors are described as governing patients through the imposition of a therapeutic intervention or regime, and of course executives at various levels of government (presidents, state governors, and mayors) govern the citizenry and formulate plans for a jurisdiction. However, over time with secularization the direct governing of souls or people by an authority figure started losing emphasis in favor of the idea of governing over places such as cities, states, or nations. This runs parallel to the growth of population and the loss of direct democracy in favor of representative democracy, the latter of which places greater emphasis on techniques of management-from-a-distance through the enactment of laws, ordinances, or statutes.

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Foucault (2007: 123) argues that direct government of souls and men is a product of the pre-Christian East rather than the West. Specifically, in ancient Egypt, Assyria, Mesopotamia, and among the Hebrews one consistently finds the theme of a king, god, or chief as shepherd (*berger*) watching over men who are like his flock. For example, Babylonian monarchs were often given the title of shepherd (*pâtre*) or pastor (*pasteur*) of men. This allows divinity to be connected to rulers so endowed with pastoral power, to the extent that as God is the shepherd of men, the king is the worldly, subaltern shepherd of men who does God's bidding. Foucault (2007: 124) cites an Assyrian hymn addressed to kings which says, "Radiant companion who shares in God's pastorship (*pastorat*), who cares for the land and provides for it, O shepherd of plenty." The specifically Hebrew innovation is to underplay the shepherding of the land, thereby creating a divine relation between the king and his subjects which emphasizes the sovereign's busy and studious supervision of a people in all their flux and movement. Foucault (2007: 125) argues that unlike the pantheon of Greek gods who are territorial gods, the Hebrew God "...is never more intense and visible than when his people are on the move, and when, in his people's wanderings, in the movement that takes them from the town, the prairies, and pastures, he goes ahead and shows his people the direction they must follow."

Hence, the first element of pastoral power is the emphasis placed on the sovereign as shepherd who watches over his flock which is composed of actual people in all their wholeness and humanity. Specifically, the concept of the *flock* focuses on people, not land or territory. The second element is that pastoral power is fundamentally a *beneficent* power. The shepherd's special goodness is that he makes his presence felt, that is, his singular purpose is to attend to the movement of the flock and give it form and purpose. The flock has no consistency outside of him, and would scatter and lose its way, unable to partake of the divinity (Heron 2018: 52).

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The third element of pastoral power is the specific end to which the flock is directed and guided, which is soteriological. Under pastoral power the ideal end pursued is religious *salvation* for members of the flock, but even with secularization salvation is still the final goal, such as in the idea of the salvation of one's country.⁵ In the modern parliamentary and constitutional systems of government, the people through their vote hand over power to the sovereign to maintain a watchful vigil over the political and legal processes, and through this exercise of power the ideals of the good or just can be pursued and hopefully attained. There is always an aspirational element to this relation between the sovereign and the people so governed, but such lofty aspirations can only be nurtured and maintained if the chosen or ordained sovereign possesses the necessary *Grundnorm*, that is, *duty* or obligation. This noble notion of honor or duty, which constitutes the fourth element of pastoral power according to Foucault, is a necessary complement to the enormous power wielded by the sovereign over his people. This idea of duty, deriving from the mystical norm standing about all norms (*Grundnorm*), provides the foundation for all authoritative proclamations concerning the good, just, and powerful and it can also act as a benchmark to check whether and to what extent the decisions and actions of those in power comport with expectations of proper conduct in office. And, of course, this takes us back to the heart of phenomenology, as Husserl spoke of with regard to the "principle of all principles," namely pure intuition stripped of all other false reductions whether fantasies, hopes, ideologies, psychologisms, and non-phenomenological procedures. Only the phenomenological reduction, according to Husserl (1931, 2013: 92), gets at the taken-for-granted substratum of

⁵ Foucault argues further that the term salvation can be replaced with *salut*, which introduces such secular ideas as safety and protection from harm. For a discussion of how this appears in the contemporary prisoners' rights movement, see Welch (2010).

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pure intuition, the principle of all principles for understanding consciousness and the reality of the natural surrounding world.

For Foucault, the ancient idea of pastoral power is merely the earliest regime for the creation of docile and obedient bodies, allowing for connecting such aspirational and soteriological undertakings as religion to later secular governance in the forms of biopower and governmentality (see Waring 2017). The various assemblages of power and the swarming of disciplinary mechanisms evident today, whether regulatory, oppressive, therapeutic, emancipatory, or resistance-based, and whether represented institutionally or by private actors, amount to social control as conceptualized by Parsons.

The Good and Bad Shepherd

Although ideally the shepherd acts in good faith and noble spirit to guide his flock to the promised land, he might just as well be fattening up the herd to take them to slaughter. This embodies Giorgio Agamben's (2011) two paradigms of economy derived from Christian theology, the first being the shepherd who leads his flock to salvation, the second the taking over of all aspects of the life of subjects (i.e., biopolitics and bare life) which shows up explicitly in modern projects of governance including financing, taxation, conscription, tithing, and the like (see Heron 2018: 23-29).

Along these same lines, and following Carl Schmitt's (2005) formulation of political theology—namely, that modern government and legal systems are derived largely from the religious and theological—Elliot Sperber (2016) argues that within the workings of all imperatively-coordinated associations (both the political and the religious) are contained the twin projects of order and justice which often exist in tension with each other. For Sperber, the

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paradigmatic figure of order is the shepherd, who must take over a total way of life so that all members of the herd are tended to and directed toward the good life, while the healer cares less about shepherding the flock toward a desired goal and more about connecting with each member in a spirit of compassion and care. Hence, the shepherd is emblematic of coercive power in the production of order, while the healer is emblematic of noncoercive power in the production of compassion and justice. Foucault's own take on pastoral power also emphasizes the coercive and order-inducing basis of pastoral power, and this is also the basis of Parsons' emphasis on the functional requisites of cultural and structural arrangements for getting things done in the world. Sperber's holding to the invidious distinction between healer (justice) and shepherd (order) does not square, however, with Seward Hiltner's (1958) discussion of the shepherd role within pastoral theology, although Hiltner acknowledges that there is an opening for interpreting it in the way described by Sperber.

Hiltner identifies aspects of shepherding that encompass the two polarities described by Agamben and Sperber above along with a third element. These three elements are healing, sustaining, and guidance. Hiltner's take on healing does indeed have some affinities to Sperber's idea of healing as justice, as Hiltner makes the point that as imperfect, fallen human beings there are always deficiencies in our efforts to make our way through the world. This assumes that on some level all of us fail and suffer to some degree, and the role of pastoral counseling is to restore functional wholeness, both within ourselves and with regard to our relations with others.

Hiltner (1958: 91) describes four basic types of failure or injury to which pastoral healing is addressed: defect, invasion, distortion, and decision. Defect is lack of capacity, similar in many ways to Parsons' concept of medical control whereby the proper response to illness is therapy not punishment. Invasion goes beyond shortcomings in personal, psychological,

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physical, cultural, or social endowment and emphasizes attack from outside which can debilitate an otherwise healthy person. Distortion can occur by way of trusting the wrong persons or developing methods of living that are false or poorly understood by the individual. Distortion seems to be a phenomenological problem, of not apprehending a situation correctly, and it can extend into relationships both primary and secondary akin to Habermas's (1984) "systematically distorted communication." And finally, so as to avoid making out human beings to be hapless victims of misfortune beyond their control, Hiltner adds the fourth element, decision, whereby the pastor reminds the stray member of the flock that he or she confronts options all along his or her life's journey and that sometimes the commandments are not heeded or that the person simply acts in bad faith. This is the volitional side of the ledger, to counterbalance the diminished capacities of defect whereby the delict is held more or less blameless.

Beyond healing, the other two elements of shepherding within pastoral theology are sustaining and guidance. Healing is directed at problems besetting a member of the flock which are capable of change—and hence is compatible with the priest acting like a doctor to diagnose an illness and fashion a remedy—while sustaining is directed at a total situation which cannot be changed, at least not for the short term. The paradigmatic case that calls forth the sustaining role of the shepherd is bereavement, in which "...no amount of change in attitude can bring back the total situation in the form of restoration of the deceased person" (Hiltner, 1958: 116). Here, the priest gives comfort to parishioners in distress and shows them that he is "standing by" to shepherd them through a difficult time while acknowledging that the total situation cannot be resolved at the present time. In such situations of loss and/or shock, the shepherd must work even harder at instilling and supporting the faith of the bereaved and drawing upon the resources

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of the congregation and the wider community. Praying and reciting scripture are two of the key activities for sustaining within the shepherding ministry.

As we move to the third element, guidance, Hiltner warns against subsuming it under the popular notion of guidance as coercion. Hiltner (1958: 147) illustrates the differences between healing, sustaining, and guiding with reference to the Good Samaritan: “The good Samaritan, binding up wounds, is healing. Giving a cup of water, he is sustaining. Taking the injured man to the hospital is guiding.” These three elements comprise the totality of the ideal shepherding role. Yet, Hiltner (*ibid.*) acknowledges that a person put in such a position of trust, empowered to tend to the needs of damaged souls, could abuse that position for personal ends or profit, stating that “If it should turn out that the Samaritan seized upon this opportunity to get inside the Jewish lines so as to poison the water supply or bribe the police department, a different perspective would have to become dominant.”

This again returns us to the problem of the good versus bad shepherd, or the good versus bad Samaritan, but also brings to bear the difference between being and acting. In response to his own example of the actions of the bad Samaritan, Hiltner (*ibid.*) provided the caveat that “The fundamental attitude toward the Samaritan under the new hypothetical situation would not change.” This is, as Agamben (2011: 53) has noted, the fracture between ontology and praxis, and between the sacred and the profane, pointing to an eternal dilemma distinguishing the substance or divine nature, on the one hand, from its economy or deployment, on the other. It is an ancient dualism haunting all religions, namely, this doctrine of *oikonomia*, the caesura between God and his government of the world. But being or life (whether bare life or political life) cannot be separated from form-of-life—that is, the forms of life that arise through concerted activities coordinated with others in physical and social environments (Agamben, 2016)—at least

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not according to many philosophers and social scientists, including of course Parsons and Foucault. It is possible to maintain continuities between being and action within a transcendental framework or worldview—which is of course how religion accomplishes this—but with secularization there is a growing reliance on immanence—the evidence of empirical reality available to the senses—for the project of social explanation.

The shepherd is always forward-looking. However, the good shepherd seeks salvation for his flock, while the bad shepherd seeks merely to use his flock as an economic resource to sell at market to the highest bidder. Like other professions, the pastorate seeks to bind its practitioners to duty and ethics in their interaction with members of the flock so as not to act instrumentally. Traina (2014) argues that for pastors to avoid becoming wolves in sheep's clothing, they must understand that their work consists in mastering three types of love simultaneously. Specifically, these are love of community (*philia*), kenotic self-emptying (*agape*), and *eros*, which is the creativity needed to deal with members of the flock as individuals who in sum generate infinite needs which must be met with whatever finite resources are available to the pastor.⁶

Kant, too, developed this as a Categorical Imperative, whereby the good shepherd acts expressively (i.e., soteriologically) always treating his charges as ends, while the bad shepherd acts instrumentally, treating his charges as means toward the acquisition of worldly goods and benefits consistent with the profit motive. From the perspective of Merleau-Ponty (1964), this is

⁶ For a phenomenological treatment of kenotic self-emptying specifically as it relates to Philippians 2:5-11, see Wells (2018).

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the question of the fit between *Wert* (value) and *Weltanschauung* (worldview), asking what presuppositions are needed to support such an actually-existing lifeworld (Whiteside 1988: 104).

The Functional Elements of Pastoral Power

It is now time to specify how the four aspects of pastoral power—flock, beneficent guidance, salvation, and duty—fit into Parsons' AGIL schema. Keeping in mind Parsons' cybernetic hierarchy of control whereby things high in information control things high in energy, we can begin to assign functions on that basis. This schematization is provided in Figure 3.

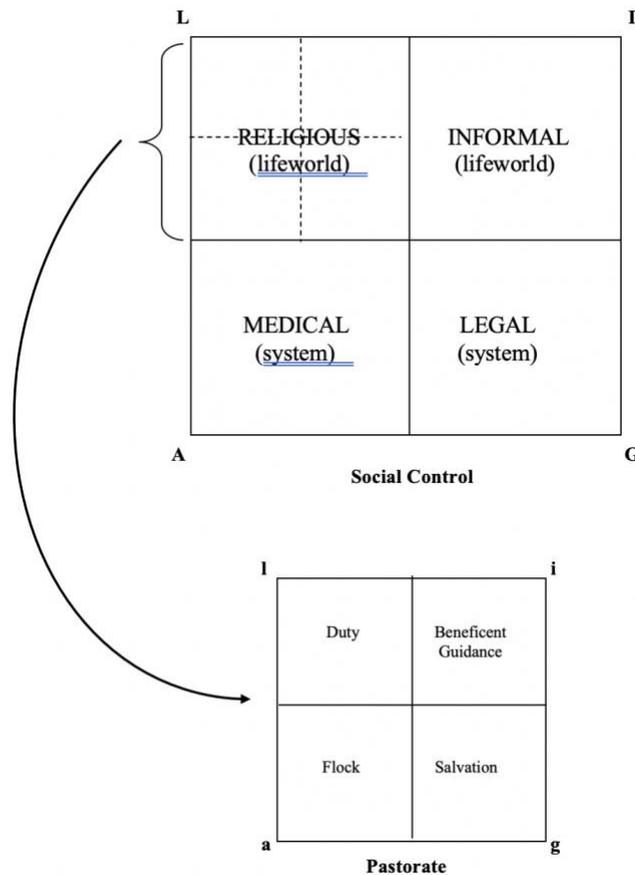


Figure 3. The Functional Elements of Religion in Relation to Social Control

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The pastorate, broadly conceived as flowing from pastoral power according to Foucault's formulation, is most directly connected with religious control within Parsons' functional schema. According to the logic of the cybernetic principle, we must begin with the groundwork of that element of social control which is highest in energy relative to the other elements. Clearly the highest in energy among the four Foucauldian elements of the pastorate is the flock consisting of people who are supervised and attended to by the shepherd. This means that the flock fulfills the A-function for religion as it relates to the social control analytic. This simply represents the reality of persons moving about in space and time within a particular environment, and the shepherd must in the first instance work with this raw material in the furtherance of the religious control function. Both the shepherd and his charges adapt to environmental resources and cues as befitting the moment and the situation.

The next function to be dealt with in the move up the cybernetic hierarchy is the goal-attainment function (G). Clearly, the goal being pursued by the shepherd is salvation. The salvation element of the system can be seen as parallel to the personality system within the action system, as this emphasizes the motivational complex steering the units of the system as prodded along by the lower level cognitive complex residing at the A-level. Remember also Weber's suggestion that organized religion is a hierocratic ICA which utilizes psychic coercion to withhold or bestow rewards on followers of the faith. This also emphasizes the connection between the collective and individual aspects of the flock, in that although the entire flock is attended to by the shepherd who gives it form and direction, each individual member must be known intimately especially insofar as the ultimate end pursued—salvation—is rewarded individually not collectively.

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The next function to be dealt with is the integrative (I) element, whereby the beneficent guidance represented by the ministrations of the shepherd, dispensed to each individual member of the flock, represents an organized and integrated solidarity unit which is synonymous in many ways with the solidarity of the church congregation. This is analogous to the social system subsystem of the action system, as the flock itself can be considered a small social system, held together by the careful and selfless work of the shepherd along with the unifying and vivifying bonds forged through a shared orientation toward the sacred.

Finally, the element highest in information relative to the other elements of the pastorate is duty, representing the principle of all principles (Husserl) or the *Grundnorm* (Kant's Categorical Imperative) lying behind and informing the decisions, actions, and sheer will of the shepherd in his ministerial work. Even the "becoming" of the unfolding of the Geist through the dialectic (Hegel) contains this transcendental feature. This is the latent-pattern maintenance (L) function of the religious system in the light of its social control function. It generally gears into the situation as a tacit or unspoken element of the system itself, which is nevertheless the edifice or foundation that paradoxically stands above the empirical substratum upon which all life projects occur, whether taking place within the lifeworld or the system.

Conclusion

In this paper I have attempted to make the case that, if religion has a distinctive role to play in the broader social control system of a society as suggested by Parsons, then we should be able to ascertain and assign the four functional subsystems of religion as a social control mechanism. One particular analytical approach, that of Foucault, explicitly articulates a fourfold schema of pastoral power which could be nested, analytically, inside Parsons' functional analysis of religion as a type of social control. I have worked through the logic of Parsons' AGIL schema,

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along with the cybernetic principle, to make sense of and apply Foucault's categories of pastoral power toward the creation of a fuller and more robust treatment of the specifics of how religion accomplishes its social control work. This is merely a starting point, and it is likely with further contemplation and analysis that additional changes and modifications will be made to the schema.

Although Parsons and Foucault represent the major thinkers in this attempt to forge a new analytic of religious social control, it should be kept in mind that Hegel, Kant, and especially Husserl and phenomenology played an important facilitative role always checking the admittedly speculative socio-philosophical and onto-theological modes of analysis utilized here. Vico (1982; see Chriss 2018) and later Herbert Spencer, and many others after them, noted that religion is the transcendental problem writ large, the embodiment par excellence of the constant struggle of reaching out to the cosmos to try to answer vexing existential questions concerning the whys and wherefores of sentient life.

Connected with this, Herbert Spencer identified two great groupings of phenomena, the knowable and the unknowable. Although science has made great strides in explaining all manner of things, thereby gaining purchase on the explication of the knowable, it has fallen short of total understanding and recognizes grudgingly the existence of the still persistently unknowable. Ultimate religious ideas, which enter willingly into the realm of the unknowable concerning the origins of the universe, the genesis of space and time, and of the transcendental generally, gain unity with the sciences over the roadblocks the latter has encountered regarding such unknowables. Indeed, as Spencer (1865: 46) noted, "If Religion and Science are to be reconciled, the basis of reconciliation must be this deepest, widest, and most certain of all facts—that the Power which the Universe manifests to us is utterly inscrutable."

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