

Duke University
Department of Sociology
GRADUATE QUALIFYING EXAMINATION
SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY
MODULES: Role/Self/Identity/Emotion, Social
Psychology of Mental and Physical Health, Social
Psychology of Race and Ethnicity
August 25-29, 2008

This examination has three sections. You must answer questions I and II. In Part III, you may select any one question

Your answers should be as complete as possible. They should not exceed a total of fifteen (15) double-spaced pages, excluding the references. You should follow a journal format (e.g., American Sociological Review) for citations. You have 24 hours from the time you receive your exam to return it to Claudette Parker as an email attachment. No discussion of any Qualifying Examination with any other person is permitted until after August 29, 2008, 9am, when all examinations have been completed.

Answer BOTH Questions I and II.

I. Sociological social psychology translates positions in the social structure into elements of situations/interactions that are experienced by, determine the behavior of, and affect the outcomes for social actors. Choose one of the major theoretical schools within sociological social psychology (e.g., stress theory, structural symbolic interactionism [ACT, ICT or Stryker's identity theory], power-dependence/exchange, Goffman's dramaturgy...among others) and show how it translates social position into the situated interaction and individual experience.

II. Sociological social psychology uses a variety of methods to address theoretical ideas: field observation, in-depth interviews, laboratory and field experiments, and surveys of general and specific populations. Briefly design two studies that would address a theoretical issue in sociological social psychology using two different methods. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each study. (Since both of you are interested in cross-cultural issues, you might focus on a theoretical question that is relevant to cultural differences, but you need not do so.)

Answer one of the following questions (Part III: Modules).

Role, Self, Identity and Emotion

RSIE II. Theorists have long argued that negative emotions flow down the status hierarchy while positive emotions flow up. Drawing from your reading, summarize the various theoretical rationales for this presumed pattern. Is the pattern empirically valid?

RSIE III. Some parts of affect control theory allow cultural variation; other parts of the model are assumed to be universal. Discuss the key components of the theory in these terms, and note how the theory can be used for the analysis of cultural variation.

RSIE IV. Identity control theory and affect control theory have rather different views of the relationship between identity and emotion. Outline the differing theoretical predictions.

Social Psychology of Mental and Physical Health

HEALTH I. Consider the significance of social inequality in understanding the distribution and variation in health/mental health. While there are powerful structural forces creating these patterns, social psychological factors are relevant as well. Outline the implications of one major social psychological theory for the study of mental /physical health, and suggest one or two topics for further research.

HEALTHII. Affect control theory can be used to interpret and predict levels of depression. Explain how the theory models this empirical phenomenon and describe its main hypotheses.

HEALTHIII. Scholars studying mental health cross-culturally vary from a highly social constructivist position to a more biological/organismic position. Describe each approach, and summarize a piece of empirical research that illustrates each. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each?

Social Psychology of Race and Ethnicity

RACE I. A large literature examines gender differences in emotional experience or expression. Take one theoretical argument in this literature and rework that primary argument to apply to racial/ethnic differences in emotion, rather than gender. Does the theory translate directly, or is some alteration necessary to apply it in this new domain?

RACEII. There are multiple theoretical accounts of how racial and ethnic identity might influence academic achievement. Outline briefly the major mechanisms through which this link might occur. Summarize the empirical evidence for each.

RACEIII. There is a large literature on racial/ethnic differences in depression. Outline the mechanisms that might link (mediate?) race/ethnicity to this outcome and summarize the empirical evidence for each.