Basic Concepts
of
Community

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Dedicated
to

My Guru Dr. H. N. Jagtap
And
My Family Members

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Dr. Ashok S. Yakkaldevi

Chapter-1

Basic Concepts

Introduction :

The term community is one of the most elusive and vague in sociology and is by now largely without specific meaning. At the minimum it refers to a collection of people in a geographical area. Three other elements may also be present in any usage. Communities may be thought of as collections of people with a particular social structure; there are, therefore, collections which are not communities. Such a notion often equates community with rural or pre-industrial society and may, in addition, treat urban or industrial society as positively destructive. A sense of belonging or community spirit. All the daily activities of a community, work and non work, take place within the geographical area, which is self contained. Different accounts of community will contain any or all of these additional elements.

We can list out the characteristics of a community as follows:

✓ Territory
✓ Close and informal relationships
✓ Mutuality
✓ Common values and beliefs
✓ Organized interaction
✓ Strong group feeling
✓ Cultural similarity

Talcott Parsons defined community as collectivity the members of which share a common territorial area as their base of operation for daily activities. According to Tonnies community is defined as an organic natural kind of social group whose members are bound together by the sense of belonging, created out of everyday contacts covering the whole range of human activities. He has presented ideal-typical pictures of the forms of social associations contrasting the solidarity nature of the social relations in the community with the large scale and impersonal relations thought to characterize industrializing societies. Kingsley Davis defined it as the smallest territorial group that can embrace all aspects of social life. For Karl Mannheim community is any circle of people who live together and belong together in such a way that they do not share this or that particular interest only but a whole set of interests

What Is Community?

Introduction:

A mobilizer, animator or activist is a person who tries to move (activate, animate) a community. The training material on this web site is aimed at mobilizers and their managers, explaining methods of making a community move.

The Nature of Communities:

Like most things in the social sciences, community does not fit into a nice neat package. We use the word a lot, but in this training it is important to ask more seriously what it is.

First, let us note that a "community" is a construct, a model. We cannot see a whole community, we cannot touch it, and we cannot directly experience it. See elephant. Like the words "hill" or "snowflake," a community may come in one of many shapes, sizes, colors and locations, no two of which are alike.

More importantly, a community is not just the people who are in it. A community usually already existed when all of its current residents were not yet born, and it will likely continue to exist when all of the people in it have left. It is something that is beyond its very components, its residents or community members. A community may have members who have temporarily moved to other locations. They may wish to eventually return, but not all do.

A "community" in some senses may not even have a physical location, but be demarcated by being a group of people with a common interest. In the training material here, however, the "community" which is the object of a mobilizer's attention, is usually one with a physical geographic location.

A Community is a Sociological Construct:

Not only is the concept of a community a "construct" (model), it is a "sociological construct." It is a set of interactions, human behaviours that have meaning and expectations between its members. Not just action, but actions based on shared expectations, values, beliefs and meanings between individuals.

To understand how a community operates, and how it changes, it is necessary to learn a little bit about sociology the science. The mobilizer is an applied scientist; social scientist. While a pure scientist is interested in how things work, the applied scientist is interested in taking that knowledge and getting useful results.

A Community has Fuzzy Boundaries:

When an identified community is a little village, separated by a few kilometers from other villages, in a rural area, its boundaries appear at first to be very simple. That pattern of human interaction may be seen as consisting only of relations between the residents living inside that location, inside that village.

But its residents interact also with people outside the village. They marry persons from near and far, and may move or bring a spouse in to live with them. At any one time, those village residents may have sisters, brothers, cousins, parents and extended relatives living elsewhere. The boundary of that community is not so precise.

Communities can be Within Communities:

There may be communities within larger communities, including districts, regions, ethnic groups, nations and other boundaries. There may be marriages and other interaction that link villages on both sides of national borders.

Communities May Move:

Furthermore, where technology is not based on local horticulture, the community residents may be physically mobile. They may be nomadic herders walking long distances with their cattle. They may be mobile fishing groups who move from time to time as the fish are available. They may be hunters who move to follow the game. They may be hunters who move to follow the game.

Urban Communities are Special:

In urban areas, a community may be a small group of a few homesteads of people from a common origin. That community in turn, may be part of a neighborhood community or a barrio or other local urban division. As the boundaries become wider, there is more heterogeneity (differences in origin, language, religion or other features that can form a common identity). It may be in turn, a part of a wider municipality, which in turn may be part of a conglomeration comprising a large city.

In general (with exceptions) an urban community has more fuzzy boundaries, is more difficult to demarcate, is more heterogeneous (varied, mixed), more complex, and more difficult to organize using standard community development methods, and has more complex and sophisticated goals, than rural communities.

The Social Perspective of Human Settlements:

A human settlement, or community, is not merely a collection of houses. It is a human (social and cultural) organization. (The houses, which are cultural products of humanity, belong to one of the six dimensions of society or culture, the technological dimension, as explained below).

Also, it is not just a collection of human individuals; it is a socio-cultural system; it is socially organized. This means that you need to know some things about society things learned in sociology. The community has a life of its own which goes beyond the sum of all the lives of all its residents. As a social organization, a community is cultural. See Culture. That means it is a system of systems, and that it is composed of things that are learned rather than transmitted by genes and chromosomes. All the social or cultural elements of a community, from its technology to its shared beliefs, are transmitted and stored by symbols.

Social Animation (promoting community participation or self help) mobilizes and organizes a community. This means that the social organization of the community is changed, however slightly or greatly. The mobilizer or animator, therefore, is a social change agent, or catalyst. Understanding the nature of social change, its social nature, in a community, should be in the mobilizer's tool box.

An Animator Must Know About Society:

It may be dangerous to dabble in changing something about which you know nothing. It is therefore the responsibility of the mobilizer to learn something from the sciences of anthropology and sociology.

A mobilizer is an applied sociologist, so must know some important features of the subject. (While mobilizing is an applied social science, it is not the same thing as Social Engineering. See Social Engineering).

Although the science of sociology is usually taught at the university level, and a social scientist needs a PhD nowadays, you do not need all that formal education. Starting from here, perhaps doing a little private literature research on your own as well, you can learn what you need about sociology to understand the social nature of communities.

The most important thing to learn was mentioned already, that a social organism such as a community has a life of its own that goes beyond the lives of the residents in it. Those individuals have their own changes while they develop as human individuals. They are born, they get older, they become adults, they marry, they get jobs, some become recognized leaders, they have children, they die. All of these personal changes in individuals do not, in themselves, change society or a community. In fact, as they are recognized, they contribute to the stability of society, and to the continuation of the community.

The second thing to learn was briefly mentioned also. All things social and cultural are transmitted by symbols rather than by genes. Community development, which is a form of social change, requires changes in the messages of symbols rather than genetic surgery.

Keep the Essential Elements of Society in Mind:

While sociology in itself can be interesting, the mobilizer needs to know more about it so as to be a better mobilizer. Since the notion of "community" is a social construct, the nature of "social" is important to understand. What, for example, is the "glue" that holds a community (or any social organization) together? How can individuals be interdependent upon each other, even while they believe they are independent organisms? Do such beliefs, even if they are not accurate, serve some purpose in sustaining or supporting social organization?

It is important for the animator to note the inter-connections between the cultural dimensions (described below) which comprise a community. While social scientists may disagree about the precise nature of those inter-connections, all will agree that the basic characteristic of society (and thus of the communities within a society) is that they are interconnected.

A community, like other social institutions, is not merely a collection of individual persons; it is a changing set of relationships, including the attitudes and behaviour of its members.

Remember that your goal is community empowerment. Knowing what a community is, and its social and cultural nature, will help you to know what it is that is becoming empowered by your efforts.

Culture is learned:

We mentioned above that a community is a cultural organism, and that it was something that went beyond those individual human beings that make it up. Culture in the social sciences is something far more than opera and ballet, so what is it? Culture consists of all those things, including actions and beliefs which human beings (as physical animals) learn, which make them human. Culture includes learned behaviour, but not things which are determined genetically. Culture is stored and transmitted by symbols; never by chromosomes. While some culture is learned in childhood (like how to talk, for example), other culture is learned by adults.

When the animator is engaging in promoting social change, she or he is promoting the learning of new ideas and behaviour. When culture is learned first, by a child, to become human, the process is called enculturation or socialization. When it is re-learned, as when a person moves to a different society, or when a community changes around the individual, it is called acculturation. Since you as a mobilizer are much involved in stimulating social change in a community, then you will come face to face with acculturation. Adult educating skills are therefore needed.

This sociological definition of "culture," which means "socio-cultural system," which is society itself, is not the common everyday definition of culture, where people usually think only of drumming and dancing, or only the arts (those belong to only one of the six dimensions of culture, the aesthetic).

Culture Transcends its Humans:

Culture is super organic (and a community is cultural). Understanding this concept, "super organic," is important in understanding a community. Just as the organic level is based on inorganic (living cells are made up of non living atoms, etc.; a dog or a tree is not a cell even though it is made up of cells), so the super organic is based on the organic (society is not a human being even though it is made up of human beings). This means that, during animation (mobilization and organization) of a community, the animator must always be able to separate what is happening to the overall community itself, in contrast to what is happening to particular individuals.

We use the word "transcend" here to mean "go beyond." It does not have a religious connotation in this use. Just as a tree, as a living organism, transcends its atoms, molecules and cells which make it up, so a community, or any social organization in culture, transcends the individual human beings which make it up. The tree or dog would not exist without its atoms or cells, nor would a community exist without its individual human beings.

The principles which affect an atom or a cell (in a dog or a tree), are not the same as those which affect the dog or tree. The forces which affect an individual human being (in a community) are not the forces which affect the development of a community.

A good mobilizer must understand the nature of social change in a community, and be able to distinguish that from the changes undergone by individuals in that community. To do that, you the mobilizer must develop a social perspective, and see how a community transcends its residents.

A Community is a Super Organic Organism or System:

A community can be seen as being something like an organism (i.e. it is organized; it has organs). It lives and functions even though its human members come and go, are born or die. Just as a living cell, plant or animal, transcends its atoms, so an institution, a behaviour pattern, or a community, transcends its individual humans. The behaviour of an atom or the life cycle of a molecule happens according to a different set of forces than the living plant or animal in which the atom or molecule is found. So, too, an individual human being is subject to a different set of forces than a social organization (such as a community) where it is found. A belief, for example, is believed by living persons, but that belief may live on through other persons long after the first ones die. The same with an institution such as marriage, an organization such as an air force, a town such as Kumasi, a custom such as shaking hands, a tool such as a hoe, or a system such as marketing. All of these transcend the individual human beings which carry them.

A society, then, is a system not an inorganic system like an engine, not an organic system like a tree, but a superorganic system built up of learned ideas, expectations and behavior of human beings. Think of three levels of organization: inorganic, organic and superorganic. Although a community is a cultural system (in that it transcends its individual persons) do not assume that a community is a harmonious unity. It isn't. It is full of factions, struggles and conflicts, based upon differences in gender, religion, access to wealth, ethnicity, class, educational level, income, ownership of capital, language and many other factors. In order to promote community participation and development, it is the task of the animator to bring these factions together, encourage tolerance and team spirit, and obtain consensus decisions. For you to promote social change in a community, it is necessary to know how that system operates, and therefor how it will respond to changes, and toyour interventions. Just as an engineer (an applied physical scientist) must know how an engine operates, the community facilitator (an applied social scientist) must know how a community operates.

To know how a community operates one must not anthropomorphise a community. To"anthropomorphise" means to assume and ascribe human characteristics to a non human thing (e.g. thinking that ducks and bears have "families" when "family" is a human institution). A community does not talk, does not think, cannot feel, and does not act like a human being. It is a super organic entity, and therefore moves, responds, grows and behaves through different principles, forces and mechanisms than a human being does.

Dimensions of Culture; Dimensions of Community:

When we say a community is not the same thing as a human being, we say it does not have emotions, a head, thoughts, legs, or a hobby. It does, however, have different parts to it that apply to social organizations and culture rather than to individual human beings. One important way to analyses a community, break it into different parts, is to use the six cultural "dimensions." We use "dimension" because these are analytical categories, made by us human beings, rather than being based upon observable parts (like parts of the body: head, arms, legs). In one of the training modules, Community Research, you will see that these six cultural dimensions (plus geography and demography) can be used as organizing categories for you to research, observe, and understand the community where you intend to work.

In mathematics, an object has three dimensions, such as height, width, and depth, four if you include time. No matter how small or in what ways you cut up that object, each piece will still have all four dimensions. So too a socio cultural entity, like a community. No matter how small or in what ways you cut up a piece of culture, it will always have all six of its dimensions.

These dimensions of community include:

1. Technological,
2. Economic,
3. Political,
4. Institutional (social),
5. Aesthetic-value, and
6. Belief-conceptual.

Each of these dimensions of culture are transmitted by symbols (not genes) and consist of systems of learned ideas and behavior. They are not "aspects" of culture; they are dimensions. Cultural dimensions may vary in size but, by definition, permeate the whole.All of these are systems within every social (or cultural) system. They are based on learned behavior, which transcends the individuals who each learned parts of them. If anyone dimension of culture is missing, by definition, all are missing.

You cannot "see" a dimension of culture or society, as you can see an individual person. Every individual manifests each of the six dimensions of culture. To become socially aware, the animator must be able to analyse all six of the dimensions, and their interrelationships, even though s/he can only see individuals, not those dimensions.

The Technological Dimension of Community:

The technological dimension of community is its capital, its tools and skills, and ways of dealing with the physical environment. It is the interface between humanity and nature.

Remember, it is not the physical tools themselves which make up the technological dimension of culture, but it is the learned ideas and behaviour which allow humans to invent, use, and teach others about tools. Technology is much a cultural dimension as beliefs and patterns of interaction; it is symbolic. Technology is cultural.

This cultural dimension is what the economist may call "real capital" (in contrast to financial capital). It is something valuable that is not produced for direct consumption, but to be used to increase production (therefore more wealth) in the future; investment. In capacity development, it is one of the sixteen elements of strength that changes (increases) as an organization or a community becomes stronger. In the war against poverty, technology provides an important set of weapons.

For an individual or a family, technology includes their house, furniture and household facilities, including kitchen appliances and utensils, doors, windows, beds and lamps. Language, which is one of the important features of being human, belongs to the technological dimension (it is a tool). This goes along with communication aids such as radio, telephones, TV, books and typewriters (now computers). In an organization, technology includes desks, computers, paper, chairs, pens, office space, telephones, washrooms and lunch rooms. Some organizations have specific technology: footballs and uniforms for football clubs, blackboards desks and chalk for schools, alters and pews for churches, guns and billie sticks for police forces, transmitters and microphones for radio stations.

In a community, communal technology includes its facilities such as public latrines and water points, roads, markets, clinics, schools, road signs, parks, community centers, libraries, sports fields. Privately owned community technology may include shops, factories, houses and restaurants. When a facilitator encourages a community build a latrine or well, new technology is introduced. A well (or latrine) is as much a tool (and an investment) as is a hammer or computer.

In general (i.e. there are exceptions) technology is perhaps the easiest of the six dimensions for introducing cultural and social change. It is easier to introduce a transistor radio than to introduce a new religious belief, new set of values or a new form of family. Paradoxically, however, introduction of new technology (by invention or borrowing) will lead to changes in all the other five dimensions of the culture.

Remember there are always exceptions; in Amish society, for example, there is a conscious communal decision to resist the introduction of new technology. They rely on the preservation of older technology (no tractors, no automobiles, and no radios) such as horse drawn carts and plows, to reinforce their sense of cultural identity. Those changes are not easily predicted, nor are they always in desired directions. After they happen, they may appear to be logical, even though they are not predicted earlier.

Through human history, technology has changed generally by becoming more complex, more sophisticated, and with a greater control over energy. One form does not immediately replace another (although horse whips have now gone out of fashion after the automobile replaced the horse over a century of change). Usually changes are accumulative, with older tools and technologies dying out if they become relatively less useful, less efficient and more expensive. In the broad sweep of history, gathering and hunting gave way to agriculture (except in a few small pockets of residual groups). Likewise, agriculture has been giving way to industry. People still practicing older less efficient technologies often find themselves marginalized and facing poverty. Where technology is highly advanced (e.g. in information technology, computers, the internet) it is practiced by a very small proportion of the world population.

Technology that might be introduced by mobilizers may belong to medicine (clinics and medicine) and health (clean water, hygiene), school buildings or covered markets in rural areas. There the residents are not usually unaware of them; they simply did not have them, before mobilizing to obtain them. The facilitator must be prepared to understand the effects on other dimensions of culture by the introduction of a change in the technological dimension.

The Economic Dimension of Community:

The economic dimension of community is its various ways and means of production and allocation of scarce and useful goods and services (wealth), whether that is through gift giving, obligations, barter, market trade, or state allocations. It is not the physical items like cash which make up the economic dimension of culture, but the ideas and behavior which give value to cash (and other items) by humans who have created the economic systems they use. Wealth is not merely money, just as poverty is not merely the absence of money.

Wealth is among the sixteen elements of community strength or organizational capacity. When the organization or community has more wealth (that it can control as an organization or community) then it has more power and more ability to achieve the things it wants to achieve. Over the broad course of human history, the general trend in economic change has been from simple to more complex. One system did not immediately replace another, but new systems were added, and less useful ones slowly died out.

In simple small groups, wealth (anything that was scarce and useful) was distributed by simple family obligations. When someone came home with some food or clothing, it was allocated to the other members of the family with no expectations of immediate returns. As society become more complex, and different groups came into contact with each other, simple trade through various forms of barter were acquired. Distribution within each family group remained more or less the same. As barter became more complex and extensive, new institutions were added to simplify the accounting: currency, accounts, banks, credit, credit cards, and debit cards. This did not immediately remove earlier forms, but gift giving and family distribution eventually became relatively smaller among the wide range of distribution systems, and barter became less important.

Remember that currency (cash, money) it has no intrinsic value. It has value only because society the community; the culture has ascribed some value to it. A hundred euro bill, for example, may be used to start a fire or to wrap tobacco into a cigarette, but its face value is worth much more than for those. In any community, you will find various forms of wealth distribution. It is important for you to learn what they are, and what things can be given, what exchanged and what bought and sold. In many societies some kinds of wealth may not be allocated by purchase, such as sexual favors, spouses, hospitality, children, entertainment. It varies. Learning how they are distributed and under what conditions and between whom (because these differ) is part of the research you need to do.

When a community decides to allocate water on the basis of a flat rate for all residences, or to allocate it on the basis of a payment for each container of water when it is collected, then a choice is being made between two very different systems of economic distribution. The animator should encourage the community to choose what it wants so as to be more consistent with prevailing values and attitudes. (A good mobilizer will not try to impose her or his notion of what would be the best system of distribution; the community members, all of them, must come to a consensus decision).

The Political Dimension of Community:

The political dimension of community is its various ways and means of allocating power, influence and decision making. It is not the same as ideology, which belongs to the values dimension. It includes, but is not limited to, types of governments and management systems. It also includes how people in small bands or informal groups make decisions when they do not have a recognized leader. Political power is among the sixteen elements of community power or organizational capacity. The more political power and influence it has, the more it can do the things it desires.

An animator must be able to identify the different types of leaders in a community. Some may have traditional or bureaucratic authority; others may have charismatic personal qualities. When working with a community, the animator must be able to help develop the existing power and decision making system to promote community unity and group decision making that benefits the whole community, not just vested interests. In the broad sweep of human history, leadership (power and influence) at first was diffuse, temporary and minimal. In a small band of gatherers and hunters, a leader might be anyone who suggested and organized a hunt. In small bands, there were no chiefs, elders or kings, and these groups are named by anthropologists as "acephalous" (headless).

As history progresses, political systems become more complex, and power and influence increased and affected larger numbers of people. Levels of political sophistication, and hierarchy, ranged from acephalous, band, tribe, through kingdom to nation state. In the simplest band, there is very little difference between the amount of power and influence of the leader and the lowest member of the band. Compare that with the difference in amount of power and influence of the President of the USA and some janitor cleaning toilets in a Washington slum hotel.

Communities, including the ones where you work, all have some political system, and some distance between the most and least levels of power between individuals and groups. It is your first task to understand how it works, how power and influence are distributed (not always the same way) and what changes are occurring. You will have some influence on that power arrangement as you stimulate the formation of a development committee. And you will be responsible for encouraging an increase of political complexity if that is the first such committee in that community.

The Institutional Dimension of Community:

The social or institutional dimension of community is composed of the ways people act, interact between each other, react, and expect each other to act and interact. It includes such institutions as marriage or friendship, roles such as mother or police officer, status or class, and other patterns of human behaviour. The institutional dimension of society is what many non sociologists first think about when they hear "sociology." It is only one of six dimensions of social organization (culture), however.

The dimension has to do with how people act in relation to each other, their expectations, their assumptions, their judgments, their predictions, their responses and their reactions. It looks at patterns of relationships sometimes identified as roles and status, and the formation of groups and institutions that derive from those patterns. A "mother-in-law," for example, is both a role (with a status) and an institution. In a community, the social organization of the community is the sum total of all those interrelationships and patterns.

The level of organization (or organizational complexity), the degree of division of labor, the extent of division of roles and functions, is another of the sixteen elements of community strength or organizational capacity. The more organized, and the more effectively organized, it is (and you can help it to become more so), the more capacity it has to achieve its communal or organizational objectives. As with the other dimensions, over history, the general movement has been from simple to complex. In early simple societies, the family was the community, and was the society. The family defined all roles and status. As societies became more complex, first the families became more complex, and then new non-familial relationships developed and were recognized. Later the family itself declined in relative importance among all the many other kinds of relationships.

Every time a new role is created, with its duties, responsibilities, rights, and expected behavior patterns, then the society becomes more complex. If you encourage the formation of a new development committee, with its official positions and membership, then the community has become that much more complex. A small rural community with no clinic or school is very likely composed of residents who are all related to each other through descent and/or marriage. If you stimulate that community to build a school or clinic, with paid teachers or health workers (usually outsiders), then you are increasing the social complexity of that community.

In that sense, perhaps the social dimension is similar to the technological dimension in being less difficult (than the other dimensions, especially the last two) in introducing social change. As with all six dimensions, a change in one such as the social dimension will have effects in each other the other five dimensions.

For the animator to be successful, she or he must know what the local institutions are, what different roles are played by men and women, and what the main forms of social interaction are.

The Aesthetic-Values Dimension of Community:

The aesthetic-value dimension of community is the structure of ideas, sometimes paradoxical, inconsistent, or contradictory, that people have about good and bad, about beautiful and ugly, and about right and wrong, which are the justifications that people cite to explain their actions. The three axes along which people make judgments are all dependent upon what they learn from childhood. These include judging between right and wrong, between good and bad, and between beautiful and ugly, all based upon social and community values. They are not acquired through our genes, but through our socialization. That implies that they can be relearned; that we could change our judgments.

Values, however, are incredibly difficult to change in a community, especially if residents perceive that an attempt is being made to change them. They do change, as community standards evolve, but that change cannot be rushed or guided through outside influence or conscious manipulation. Shared community standards are important in community and personal identity; who one is very much is a matter of what values one believes in. The degree to which community or organizational members share values, and/or respect each others' values, is an important component among the sixteen elements of strength and capacity. Values tend to change as the community grows more complex, more heterogeneous, more connected to the world. Changes in values tend to result from changes in technology, changes in social organization, and not by preaching or lecturing for direct changes.

It appears that there is no overall direction of change in human history, that judgments become more liberal, more tolerant, more catholic, more eclectic, or less as societies become more complex and sophisticated. Communities at either end of the social complexity spectrum display standards of various degrees of rigidity. In spite of that range, within any community there is usually a narrow range of values among residents. Urban and heterogeneous communities tend to have a wider variation in values and aesthetics.

It is not easy to predict the value standards of any community before you go to live there and to find out how to operate within the community. Because of their importance, however, it is necessary that you, the mobilize learn as much as you can about community standards, and do not assume that they will be the same as your own.

While the introduction of new facilities and services in a community may eventually lead to changes in community standards, anything a mobilize proposes must be seen to be within the prevailing sets of community values.

Whenever an animator introduces new ways of doing things in the community, prevailing values, however contradictory and varied, must be considered.

The Beliefs-Conceptual Dimension of Community:

The belief-conceptual dimension of community is another structure of ideas, also sometimes contradictory, that people have about the nature of the universe, the world around them, their role in it, cause and effect, and the nature of time, matter, and behavior.

This dimension is sometimes thought to be the religion of the people. It is a wider category, and also includes atheistic beliefs, for example, that man created God in his own image. It includes shared beliefs in how this universe came to be, how it operates, and what is reality. It is religion and more.

When you drop a pencil onto the floor, you demonstrate your belief in gravity. When you say the sun comes up in the morning (it does not; the earth turns) you express your world view. If you, the mobilize, are seen to be someone who is attacking the beliefs of the people, you will find your work hindered, opposition to you and your goals, and failure as a mobilize. Whether or not you want to oppose local beliefs, you must be seen to do not want to change them.

In the broad sweep of human existence, the general trend of change has been for a decrease in the number of deities, and a reduction from sacred-profane differences in space to secular space. From local polytheism with many gods, humans moved to a polytheism with fewer gods, from that humans moved to monotheism (one god) and from there an increase in the proportion of people who believe in no god. In humankind experience, it appears that those groups with local traditional gods tend to be more tolerant of other gods than are the so-called "universal" religions which each say they alone have the true answer. Huge wars have been fought over religions (an irony in that most religions call for peace and tolerance), and this should be a warning to the mobilize about the extent to which people fervently hold their beliefs.

The animator must learn study and be aware of what the prevailing beliefs are in the community. To be an effective catalyst of social change, the animator must make suggestions and promote actions which do not offend those prevailing beliefs, and which are consistent with, or at least appropriate to, existing beliefs and concepts of how the universe works.

All Six Dimensions are in Each Bit of Culture:

The important thing to remember is that in any society, in any community, in any institution, in any interaction between individuals, there is an element of culture, and that includes something of each of those six cultural dimensions. All of these are learned from birth. The new-born child is like an animal, not yet a human being, but he or she begins learning culture (humanizing) immediately (for example, when drinking from the breast) by interacting with other humans, and thus starts becoming human. (Many say that this humanizing process begins in the womb). This process of learning, and thus of becoming, continues until death. If you are not learning, you are dead.

When you are at a community meeting, when you are in a classroom, when you meet someone face to face, wherever you are, you are part of culture, part of the sociocultural system, and you can find all six dimensions. Sometimes, when we try to look objectively at culture in a scientific way, we forget that we are part of culture ourselves. The tools we use, the interaction we are engaged in, the beliefs and values we hold, are all part of our culture, and part of our existence as social animals. If we do our work as a mobilizer in a community other than where we grew up, our culture will differ from that of the residents. See: Acculturation.

We are not free of that obligation if we are trying to mobilize our own community. A proverb that illustrates an anthropological principle is, "It is a strange fish that knows the existence of water."

Because our very existence, and our understanding of ourselves, is a product of our culture, and our socialization into it, we are not aware of the nature of that culture. Like a fish that has never been out of water (and able to compare it with its absence) we cannot and do not exist outside of culture.

Interconnectedness Has a Practical Use:

For the mobilizer, and for anyone who is engaged in any development activities, the important part of all this is the variety of interconnections between those cultural dimensions. They may be causally and functionally inter-related. Technology (in contrast to popularly held ideas), for example, both the tools and the skills to use them, are as much a part of culture or social system as are beliefs, dances, and ways of allocating wealth. To make changes in any one dimension has repercussions in each of the other dimensions. To introduce a new method of obtaining water, for example, requires the introduction of new institutions to maintain the new water system.

Learning any new ways of doing things will require the learning of both new values and new perceptions. Changes in any dimension will start changes, like the ripples of water on a calm lake when you throw a stone into it, and ultimately all six dimensions will change. To ignore such interconnections while promoting technology transfer is to do so at your peril (unexpected and/or unwanted results may be produced). You need to carefully observe changes in the community where you may be working, and look for the repercussions in change in each dimension as they affect the other dimensions.

The Interconnectedness Affects Social Change:

To change something in one cultural dimension not only requires changes in other dimensions, it causes changes in other dimensions. That is why social impact assessment should be made of all projects, large and small. As you become more experienced, you will begin to see some changes that follow as a result of introductions of new ways of doing things. The more you can predict such changes, the more you can be prepared for them. The more you can predict changes in each dimension, the more you can modify your actions so that the community might be more likely to change in ways you desire.

Remember, however, that you are not a social engineer, and cannot precisely determine how a community will respond to your work.

Conclusion: The Mobilizer Must Understand Community:

To be more effective as a mobilizer, to empower or strengthen communities, you need to know the nature of communities, and how they behave. Communities are social or cultural organizations, and, as such, are characterized by the six cultural dimensions. Communities are not the same as human individuals, but grow and change by their own sets of principles. The key to understanding these characteristics and principles is to recognize those six dimensions of culture, and their inter-relationships.

The interconnections between these cultural (2) dimensions are neither simple nor easy to predict. The animator must be aware that they exist, and continually encourage observation, analysis, sharing of ideas, reading, and attending lectures or seminars. By working with communities, the animator must learn more and more about their culture, and the dynamics of their cultural dimensions.

Chapter-2

Community

The term community is one of the most elusive and vague in sociology and is by now largely without specific meaning. At the minimum it refers to a collection of people in a geographical area. Three other elements may be present in any usage of the term community.

(a) Communities may be thought of as collections of people with a particular social structure; there are, therefore, collections which are not communities. Such a notion often equates community with rural or preindustrial society and may, in addition, treat urban or industrial society as positively destructive.

(b) A sense of belonging or community spirit.

(c) All the daily activities of a community, work and non-work, take place within the geographical area; it is self-contained.

Different accounts of community will contain any or all of these additional elements.

The century sociologists used a concept of community, explicitly or implicitly, in that they operated with dichotomies between preindustrial and industrial, or rural and urban societies. Ferdinand Tonnies, for example, in his distinction between gemeinschaft and gesellschaft, treats communities as particular kinds of society which are predominantly rural, united by kinship and a sense of belonging, and self-contained. We shall elaborate this later while discussing association. The century sociologists, the term community was part of their critique of urban, industrial society. On the one hand, communities were associated with all the good characteristics that were thought to be possessed by rural societies. Urban societies, on the other, represented a destruction of community values. Some of these attitudes persist today.

However, it became clear that societies could not be sharply divided into rural or urban, communities or non-communities, and sociologists proposed a rural-urban continuum instead, along which sentiments could be ranged according to various features of their social structure.

There was little agreement about what features differentiated settlements along the continuum, beyond an insistence on the significance of kinship, friendship and self-containment. The community study tradition was also important in its development of techniques of participant observation but has lost favor recently, partly because, as national considerations become important, communities become less self-contained, and partly because urban sociologists have become interested in other problems.

Amitai Etzioni in New Golden Rule (1996) points out that community may be defined with reasonable precision.

Community has two characteristics:

(a) A web of affect-laden relationships among a group of individuals, relationships that often crisscross and reinforce one another (as opposed to one-on-one relationships);

(b) A measure of commitment to a set of shared histories and identities in short, a particular culture.

David E. Pearson (1995) states:

To earn the appellation of “community”, it seems to me, groups must be able to exert moral suasion and extract a measure of compliance from their members. That is, communities are necessarily, indeed by definition, coercive as well as moral, threatening their members with the stick of sanctions if they stray, offering them the carrot of certainty and stability if they dont. More recently, the term community has been used to indicate a sense of identity or belonging that may or may not be tied to geographical location. In this sense, a community is formed when people have a reasonably clear idea of who has something in common with them and who has not. Communities are, therefore, essentially mental constructs, formed by imagined boundaries between groups (Anderson 2006). An example of this is the nation as a community (for example, "Indianness") and thereby different from other nations even when they could not know personally other members of the imagined community.

The term community continues to have some practical and normative force. For example, the ideal of the rural community still has some grip and we often see town planners aim at creating a community spirit in these designs.

Community:

"A community is that collectivity d members of which share a common territorial areas d base of operation for daily activities.

1. Territory
2. Common act & life style
3. Permanency
4. Gratification of multiple end (needs)
5. Small sign (MacIver ; size may b large also) strong feeling
6. Commercial relation not driven by law rather defined by values & norms.

Institution

In the social sciences, institutions are the structures and mechanisms of social order and cooperation governing the behavior of a set of individuals within a given human collectivity. Institutions include the family, religion, peer group, economic systems, legal systems, penal systems, language, and the media.

A social institution is a complex, integrated set of social norms organized around the preservation of a basic societal value. Obviously, the sociologist does not define institutions in the same way as does the person on the street. Lay persons are likely to use the term "institution" very loosely, for churches, hospitals, jails, and many other things as institutions.

Sociologists often reserve the term "institution" to describe normative systems that operate in five basic areas of life, which may be designated as the primary institutions.

1. In determining Kinship;
2. In providing for the legitimate use of power;
3. In regulating the distribution of goods and services;
4. In transmitting knowledge from one generation to the next; and
5. In regulating our relation to the supernatural.
6. In shorthand form, or as concepts, these five basic institutions are called the family, government, economy, education and religion.

The five primary institutions are found among all human groups. They are not always as highly elaborated or as distinct from one another as into the United States, but, in rudimentary form at last, they exist everywhere. Their universality indicates that they are deeply rooted in human nature and that they are essential in the development and maintenance of orders. Sociologists operating in terms of the functionalist model society have provided the clearest explanation of the functions served by social institutions. Apparently there are certain minimum tasks that must be performed in all human groups. Unless these tasks are performed adequately, the group will cease to exist. An analogy may help to make the point. We might hypothesize that cost accounting department is essential to the operation of a large corporation. A company might procure a superior product and distribute it then at the price which is assigned to it, the company will soon go out of business. Perhaps the only way to avoid this is to have a careful accounting of the cost of each step in the production and distribution process.

An institution is any structure or mechanism of social order and cooperation governing the behavior of a set of individuals within a given community may it be human or a specific animal one. Institutions are identified with a social purpose, transcending individuals and intentions by mediating the rules that govern cooperative living behavior.

The term "institution" is commonly applied to customs and behavior patterns important to a society, as well as to particular formal organizations of government and public services. As structures and mechanisms of social order among certain species, institutions are one of the principal objects of study in the social sciences, such as political science, anthropology, economics, and sociology (the latter being described by Durkheim as the "science of institutions, their genesis and their functioning").Institutions are also a central concern for law, the formal mechanism for political rule-making and enforcement.

Examples of Institutions [edit]

- ✓ Marriage and the family - sociology of the family
- ✓ Religion and religious institutions - see sociology of religion; civil religion
- ✓ Educational institutions schools (preschool, primary/ elementary, secondary, and post-secondary/higher - see Sociology of education)
- ✓ Research community Academia and universities; research institutes - see sociology of science
- ✓ Medicine- hospitals and other health care institutions - see sociology of health and illness, medical sociology
- ✓ Psychiatric hospitals (history)
- ✓ Law and legal system - courts; judges; the legal profession (bar) - see jurisprudence, philosophy of law, sociology of law
- ✓ Criminal justice or penal systems - prisons - see sociology of punishment

- ✓ Military or paramilitary forces - see military sociology
- ✓ Police forces
- ✓ Mass media- including the news media (television, newspapers) and the popular media - see media studies
- ✓ Industry - businesses, including corporations - see financial institution, factory, capitalism, division of labor, social class, industrial sociology
- ✓ Civil society or NGOs - Charitable organizations; advocacy groups; political parties; think tanks; virtual communities

In an extended context:

- ✓ Art and culture (See also: Culture industry, Critical theory, Cultural studies, Cultural sociology)
- ✓ Language (See also: Linguistics, Sociolinguistics, and Sociology of language)
- ✓ The nation-state - Social and political scientists often speak of the state as embodying all institutions such as schools, prisons, and so on. However, these institutions may be considered private or autonomous, whilst organised religion and family life certainly pre-date the advent of the nation state. In the Neo-Marxist thought of Antonio Gramsci, for instance, a distinction may be felt between the institutions of political society (the police, the army, legal system, etc.) which dominates directly and coercively, and civil society (the family, the education system, etc.)
- ✓ In some circumstances, individuals can be considered institutions if they are responsible for creating motifs or worldwide phenomena. Examples of this include Stanley Kubrick, Nelson Mandela, and Gandhi.

Aspects of institutions

Although individual, formal organizations, commonly identified as "institutions," may be deliberately and intentionally created by people, the development and functioning of institutions in society in general may be regarded as an instance of emergence; that is, institutions arise, develop and function in a pattern of social self-organization, which goes beyond the conscious intentions of the individual humans involved.

As mechanisms of social interaction, institutions manifest in both formal organizations, such as the U.S. Congress, or the Roman Catholic Church, and, also, in informal social order and organization, reflecting human psychology, culture, habits and customs, and encompassing subjective experience of meaningful enactments. Most important institutions, considered abstractly, have both objective and subjective aspects: examples include money and marriage. The institution of money encompasses many formal organizations, including banks and government treasury departments and stock exchanges, which may be termed, "institutions," as well as subjective experiences, which guide people in their pursuit of personal well-being. Powerful institutions are able to imbue a paper currency with certain value, and to induce millions into cooperative production and trade in pursuit of economic ends abstractly denominated in that currency's units.[citation needed] The subjective experience of money is so pervasive and persuasive that economists talk of the "money illusion" and try to disabuse their students of it, in preparation for learning economic analysis.[citation needed]

Perspectives of the social sciences [edit]

While institutions tend to appear to people in society as part of the natural, unchanging landscape of their lives, study of institutions by the social sciences tends to reveal the nature of institutions social constructions, artifacts of a particular time, culture and society, produced by collective human choice, though not directly by individual intention. Sociology traditionally analyzed social institutions in terms of interlocking social roles and expectations. Social institutions created and were composed of groups of roles, or expected behaviors. The social function of the institution was executed by the fulfillment of roles. Basic biological requirements, for reproduction and care of the young, are served by the institutions of marriage and family, for example, by creating, elaborating and prescribing the behaviors expected for husband/father, wife/mother, child, etc.

The relationship of institutions to human nature is a foundational question for the social sciences. Institutions can be seen as "naturally" arising from, and conforming to, human nature a fundamentally conservative view or institutions can be seen as artificial, almost accidental, and in need of architectural redesign, informed by expert social analysis, to better serve human needs a fundamentally progressive view. Adam Smith anchored his economics in the supposed human "propensity to truck, barter and exchange". Modern feminists have criticized traditional marriage and other institutions as element of an oppressive and obsolete patriarchy. The Marxist view which sees human nature as historically 'evolving' towards voluntary social cooperation, shared by some anarchists, is that supra individual institutions such as the market and the state are incompatible with the individual liberty which would obtain in a truly free society.

Economics, in recent years, has used game theory to study institutions from two perspectives. Firstly, how do institutions survive and evolve? In this perspective, institutions arise from Nash equilibrium of games. For example, whenever people pass each other in a corridor or thoroughfare, there is a need for customs, which avoid collisions. Such a custom might call for each party to keep to their own right (or left such a choice is arbitrary, it is only necessary that the choice be uniform and consistent). Such customs may be supposed to be the origin of rules, such as the rule, adopted in many countries, which requires driving automobiles on the right side of the road.

Secondly, how do institutions affect behavior? In this perspective, the focus is on behavior arising from a given set of institutional rules. In these models, institutions determine the rules (i.e. strategy sets and utility functions) of games, rather than arise as equilibrium out of games. For example, the Cournot duopoly model is based on an institution involving an auctioneer who sells all goods at the market-clearing price. While it is always possible to analyse behavior with the institutions as equilibrium approach instead, it is much more complicated.

In political science, the effect of institutions on behavior has also been considered from a meme perspective, like game theory borrowed from biology. A "mimetic institutionalism" has been proposed, suggesting that institutions provide selection environments for political action, whereby differentiated retention arises and thereby a Darwinian evolution of institutions over time. Public choice theory, another branch of economics with a close relationship to political science, considers how government policy choices are made, and seeks to determine what the policy outcomes are likely to be, given a particular political decision-making process and context.

In history, a distinction between eras or periods implies a major and fundamental change in the system of institutions governing a society. Political and military events are judged to be of historical significance to the extent that they are associated with changes in institutions. In European history, particular significance is attached to the long transition from the feudal institutions of the Middle Ages to the modern institutions, which govern contemporary life.

Institutionalization

The term "institutionalization" is widely used in social theory to refer to the process of embedding something (for example a concept, a social role, a particular value or mode of behavior) within an organization, social system, or society as a whole. The term may also be used to refer to committing a particular individual to an institution, such as a mental institution. To this extent, "institutionalization" may carry negative connotations regarding the treatment of, and damage caused to, vulnerable human beings by the oppressive or corrupt application of inflexible systems of social, medical, or legal controls by publicly owned, private or not-for-profit organizations.

The term "institutionalization" may also be used in a political sense to apply to the creation or organization of governmental institutions or particular bodies responsible for overseeing or implementing policy, for example in welfare or development.

Social Institutions

A social institution may be defined as an organizational system which functions to satisfy basic social needs by providing an ordered framework linking the individual to the larger culture.

The Basic Institutions

- ✓ Family
- ✓ Religion
- ✓ Government
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Economics

General Functions of Social Institutions

- ✓ Institution Satisfy the Basic Needs of Society.
- ✓ Institution Define Dominant Social Values.
- ✓ Institutions Establish Permanent Patterns of Social Behavior
- ✓ Monogamy Institutions Support Other Institutions.
- ✓ Institutions Provide Roles for Individuals.
- ✓ Husband and Wife.

Specific Functions of Individual Institutions

- ✓ The Specific Functions of the Family
- ✓ The control and regulation of sexual behavior.
- ✓ To provide for new members of society (children).

- ✓ To provide for the economic and emotional maintenance of individuals.
- ✓ To provide for primary socialization of children.

The Specific Function of Religion

- ✓ Providing solutions for unexplained natural, phenomena.
- ✓ Supplying a means for controlling the natural world.
- ✓ Religion tends to support the normative structure of the society.
- ✓ Furnishing a psychological diversion from unwanted life situations.
- ✓ Sustaining the existing class structure.
- ✓ Religion serves as an instrument of socialization.
- ✓ Religion may both promote and retard social change.
- ✓ Religion may both reduce and encourage conflict in groups.

The Specific Functions of Government

- ✓ The Institutionalization of norms (Laws).
- ✓ The enforcement of laws.
- ✓ The adjudication of conflict (Court).
- ✓ Provide for the welfare of members of society.
- ✓ Protection of Society from external threat.

The Specific Functions of Education

- ✓ Transmitting culture.
- ✓ Preparation for occupational roles
- ✓ Evaluating and Selecting competent individuals
- ✓ Transmitting functional skills for functioning in society.

Specific Functions of Economy

- ✓ Provide methods for the production of goods and services.
- ✓ Provide methods for the distribution of goods and services.
- ✓ Enable society's members to consume goods and services which are produced.

Functions of Activities

- ✓ All activities have, or result in certain functions. These functions may be thought of as the effects of an activity.

- ✓ The concept of manifest and latent function was introduced into sociology by Robert K. Merton (1910-???)
- ✓ Manifest Function is those functions which are both recognized and intended.
- ✓ Latent Function is those functions which are neither intended nor readily recognized.

Topics in Sociology: Social Institutions

Social institutions are established or standardized patterns of rule-governed behavior. They include the family, education, religion, and economic and political institutions.

Major Perspectives

Marx

- ✓ Social institutions are determined by their society's mode of production.
- ✓ Social institutions serve to maintain the power of the dominant class.

Weber

- ✓ Social institutions are interdependent but no single institution determines the rest.
- ✓ The causes and consequences of social institutions cannot be assumed in advance.

Durkheim

- ✓ Set the stage for later functionalist analyses of institutions by concluding that religion promotes social solidarity and collective conscience.

Functionalist theory

- ✓ The social institutions listed in this section (along with other social institutions) fulfill functional prerequisites and are essential.
- ✓ Conflict theory
- ✓ Social institutions tend to reinforce inequalities and uphold the power of dominant groups.
- ✓ Emphasizes divisions and conflicts within social institutions.
- ✓ Symbolic interactionism

- ✓ Focuses on interactions and other symbolic communications within social institutions.

The term, “social institution” is somewhat unclear both in ordinary language and in the philosophical literature (see below). However, contemporary sociology is somewhat more consistent in its use of the term. Typically, contemporary sociologists use the term to refer to complex social forms that reproduce themselves such as governments, the family, human languages, universities, hospitals, business corporations, and legal systems. A typical definition is that proffered by Jonathan Turner (Turner 1997: 6): “a complex of positions, roles, norms and values lodged in particular types of social structures and organising relatively stable patterns of human activity with respect to fundamental problems in producing life-sustaining resources, in reproducing individuals, and in sustaining viable societal structures within a given environment.” Again, Anthony Giddens says (Giddens 1984: 24): “Institutions by definition are the more enduring features of social life.” He (Giddens 1984: 31) goes on to list as institutional orders, modes of discourse, political institutions, economic institutions and legal institutions. The contemporary philosopher of social science, Rom Harre follows the theoretical sociologists in offering this kind of definition (Harre 1979: 98): “An institution was defined as an interlocking double-structure of persons-as-role-holders or office-bearers and the like, and of social practices involving both expressive and practical aims and outcomes.” He gives as examples (Harre 1979: 97) schools, shops, post offices, police forces, asylums and the British monarchy.

In this entry the above-noted contemporary sociological usage will be followed. Doing so has the virtue of grounding philosophical theory in the most salient empirical discipline, namely, sociology.

At this point it might be asked why a theory of social institutions has, or ought to have, any philosophical interest; why not simply leave such theorising to the sociologists? One important reason stems from the normative concerns of philosophers. Philosophers, such as John Rawls (Rawls 1972), have developed elaborate normative theories concerning the principles of justice that ought to govern social institutions. Yet they have done so in the absence of a developed theory of the nature and point of the very entities (social institutions) to which the principles of justice in question are supposed to apply. Surely the adequacy of one's normative account of the justice or otherwise of any given social institution, or system of social institutions, will depend at least in part on the nature and point of that social institution or system.

The entry has five sections. In the first section various salient accounts of social institutions are discussed. Accounts emanating from sociological theory as well as philosophy are mentioned. Here, as elsewhere, the boundaries between philosophy and non-philosophical the orising in relation to an empirical science are vague. Hence, it is important to note the theories of the likes of Durkheim and Talcott Parsons as well as those of John Searle and David Lewis.

In the second section so-called collective acceptance theories of social institutions are discussed (Searle 1995 and 2010; Tuomela 2002 and 2007.

In the third section a teleological account of social institutions is presented (Miller 2001 and 2010). Teleological explanation is out of fashion in many areas of philosophy. However, it remains influential in contemporary philosophical theories of social action.

In the fourth section, the so-called agent-structure question is addressed. At bottom, this issue concerns the apparent inconsistency between the autonomy (or alleged autonomy) of individual human agents, on the one hand, and the ubiquity and pervasive influence of social forms on individual character and behaviour, on the other.

In the fifth and final section the specific normative issue of the justice of social institutions is explored. This section includes a discussion of intra-institutional justice, e.g. the justice or injustice of the reward system within an institution, as well as extra-institutional justice, e.g. the justice or injustice of a power relationship between a government and refugees.

Social Institutions

Definition: Groups of persons banded together for common purposes having rights, privileges, liabilities, goals, or objectives distinct and independent from those of individual members.

Definition Source: Webster's II New Riverside University Dictionary

Social Institutions Categories:

1.3.4.1 Community: A group of people residing in the same locality and under the same government or a group or class having common interests. (Definition Source: Webster's II New Riverside University Dictionary)

1.3.4.2 Community Service Organizations: Non-profit, charitable organizations dedicated to assisting others meet basic needs, resolve personal or family problems, or improving their community. This includes soup kitchens, rotary clubs, Boys and Girls Clubs, scouts, etc. (Definition Source: None)

1.3.4.3 Educational Institutions: Social organizations dedicated to teaching skills and knowledge to individuals. (Definition Source: None)

1.3.4.4 Ethnic or Cultural Groups: A social organization consisting of many extended family groups related by a distant, common ancestry. (Definition Source: None)

1.3.4.5 Extended Family: A social organization consisting of several nuclear family groups related by common ancestry. (Definition Source: None)

1.3.4.6 Families and Households: A fundamental social group consisting especially of a man and a women and their offspring; a domestic establishment including the members of a family and other who live under the same roof. (Definition Source: Webster's II New Riverside University Dictionary)

1.3.4.7 Governments and Legal Institutions: The office, function, authority, or organization that sets forth and administer public policy and the affairs. A government consists of a legislative branch which writes law and policy, executive branch which executes law and policy, and judicial branch which enforces law and policy. This includes local, state, and national governments. This includes all branches of the military. (Definition Source: Monitoring Social Indicators for Ecosystem Management)

1.3.4.8 Health Care Institutions: Social institutions that specialize in monitoring public health, providing health maintenance, and treating illness and injury. (Definition Source: None)

1.3.4.10 Intellectual and Cultural Organizations: Social organizations dedicated to search for new knowledge or the development and preservation of art. (Definition Source: None)

1.3.4.11 Market Institutions: Social organizations dedicated to barter and trade. This includes all corporations and businesses. (Definition Source: None)

1.3.4.12 Political and Non Government Organizations: Social organizations dedicated to influencing the processes of government; political parties. This includes non-governmental organizations and groups of people with common goals, interests, or ideals formally bound together by a common set of rules or by-laws that influence public policy. (Definition Source: None)

1.3.4.13 Religious Organizations: Groups of people who share a common, codified belief in and reverence for a supernatural power accepted as the creator and governor of the universe. (Definition Source: Webster's II New Riverside University Dictionary)

Definition:

Social institutions are a system of behavioral and relationship patterns that are densely interwoven and enduring, and function across an entire society. They order and structure the behavior of individuals by means of their normative character. Institutions regulate the behavior of individuals in core areas of society:

a) Family and relationship networks carry out social reproduction and socialization;

b)Institutions in the realm of education and training ensure the transmission and cultivation of knowledge, abilities and specialized skills;

c) Institutions in the labor-market and economy provide for the production and distribution of goods and services; d) institutions in the realm of law, governance and politics provide for the maintenance of the social order;

e) While cultural, media and religious institutions further the development of contexts of meaning, value orientations and symbolic codes.

Description

Social institutions are important structural components of modern societies that address one or more fundamental activity and/or specific function. Without social institutions, modern societies could not exist. Societies consist of a range of institutions that play myriad specific roles in facilitating human social life, and which themselves are dependent upon one another for the performance of their respective functions. A given institution can also perform different functions at once and/or over time. In this respect they differ from formal organizations, which are hierarchically differentiated via an organizational structure and serve primarily to facilitate rational action (Zweckhande ln) and the realization of particular interests.

In sociological theory, there are three prevailing interpretations of social institutions: functionalist approaches, Marxist-inspired conflict-oriented explanations, and neo-institution a list approaches.

Functionalist approaches in the tradition of Durkheim and Parsons emphasize the importance of social institutions for the maintenance of social systems. Social integration is only possible when institutions perform core functions. Three such functions can be distinguished: first, institutions structure human social relationships and serve as a catalyst for the role expectations with which individuals are confronted in their everyday actions. Second, institutions regulate the distribution of gratifications and the allocation of suitable persons to positions of power. Third, by means of symbols, policies and ideologies, certain social institutions represent and stabilize the value canons and contexts of meaning of social systems. In contrast to functionalist approaches, conflict theory (Coser) has as its point of departure the insight that because conflict and inequality are inherent in modern societies, social institutions do not perform equally well for all members of society. From this perspective, institutions are seen as instruments for the realization of power and hegemony, and help stabilize prevailing inequalities. For scholars in this tradition, it is easy to demonstrate that ethnic minorities, women and those in lower social strata benefit less from the functioning of institutions, or are shaped by them in specific ways. Moreover, several members of the Frankfurt School of critical theory (Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse) underscore that institutions can function in manipulative and alienating ways, for they serve first and foremost to legitimate prevailing power relations.

Chapter-3

Culture

Introduction

Bottom of Form

Unfortunately, there is no simple answer to the question of what is culture. Culture is a complicated phenomenon to understand because it is both distinct from but clearly associated with society. Also, different definitions of culture reflect different theories or understandings, making it difficult to pin down exact definitions of the concept.

Generally speaking, the following elements of social life are considered to be representative of human culture: "stories, beliefs, media, ideas, works of art, religious practices, fashions, rituals, specialized knowledge, and common sense" (Griswold 2004:xvi).

Yet, examples of culture do not, in themselves, present a clear understanding of the concept of culture; culture is more than the object or behavior. Culture also includes, â€¦norms, values, beliefs, or expressive symbols. Roughly, norms are the way people behave in a given society, values are what they hold dear, beliefs are how they think the universe operates, and expressive symbols are representations, often representations of social norms, values, and beliefs themselves. (Griswold 2004:3)

To summarize, culture encompasses objects and symbols, the meaning given to those objects and symbols, and the norms, values, and beliefs that pervade social life.

Notes: The word 'culture' comes from the Latin root 'colere' (to inhabit, to cultivate, or to honor), meaning, the customs and beliefs, art, way of life and social organization of a particular country or group, or, the beliefs and attitudes about 5th that people in a particular group or organization share.

'High' Culture

Many people today use a concept of culture that developed in Europe during the 18th and early 19th centuries. This concept ofculture reflected inequalities within European societies and their colonies around the world. It identifies culture with civilization and contrasts both with nature. According to this thinking, some countries are more civilized than others, and some people are more cultured than others. Thus some cultural theorists have actually tried to eliminate popular or mass culture from the definition of culture. Theorists like Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) believed that culture is simply that which is created by "the best that has been thought and said in the world" (Arnold 1960:6). Anything that doesn't fit into this category is labeled as chaos or anarchy. On this account, culture is closely tied to cultivation, which is the progressive refinement of human behavior.

In practice, culture referred to elite goods and activities such as haute cuisine, high fashion or haute couture, museum-caliber art and classical music, and the word cultured referred to people who knew about, and took part in, these activities. For example, someone who used culture in the sense of cultivation might argue that classical music is more refined than music by working-class people, such as jazz or the indigenous music traditions of aboriginal peoples.

People who use culture in this way tend not to use it in the plural. They believe that there are not distinct cultures, each with their own internal logic and values, but rather only a single standard of refinement to which all groups are held accountable. Thus people who differ from those who believe themselves to be cultured in this sense are not usually understood as having a different culture; they are understood as being uncultured.

The Changing Concept of Culture

Today most social scientists reject the cultured vs. uncultured concept of culture and the opposition of culture to human nature. They recognize that non-elites are as cultured as elites (and that non-Westerners are just as civilized); they are just cultured in a different way.

During the Romantic Era, scholars in Germany, especially those concerned with nationalism, developed a more inclusive notion of culture as worldview. That is, each ethnic group is characterized by a distinct and incommensurable world view. Although more inclusive, this approach to culture still allowed for distinctions between civilized and primitive or tribal cultures.

By the late 19th century, anthropologists had changed the concept of culture to include a wider variety of societies, ultimately resulting in the concept of culture outlined above - objects and symbols, the meaning given to those objects and symbols, and the norms, values, and beliefs that pervade social life.

This new perspective has also removed the evaluative element of the concept of culture and instead proposes distinctions rather than rankings between different cultures. For instance, the high culture of elites is now contrasted with popular or pop culture. In this sense, high culture no longer refers to the idea of being cultured, as all people are cultured. High culture simply refers to the objects, symbols, norms, values, and beliefs of a particular group of people; popular culture does the same.

The Origins of Culture: Attentive to the theory of evolution, anthropologists assumed that all human beings are equally evolved, and the fact that all humans have cultures must in some way be a result of human evolution. They were also wary of using biological evolution to explain differences between specific cultures - an approach that either was a form of, or legitimized forms of, racism. Anthropologists believed biological evolution produced an inclusive notion of culture, a concept that anthropologists could apply equally to non-literate and literate societies, or to nomadic and to sedentary societies. They argued that through the course of their evolution, human beings evolved a universal human capacity to classify experiences, and encode and communicate them symbolically. Since these symbolic systems were learned and taught, they began to develop independently of biological evolution (in other words, one human being can learn a belief, value, or way of doing something from another, even if they are not biologically related). That this capacity for symbolic thinking and social learning is a product of human evolution confounds older arguments about nature versus nurture. Thus, Clifford Geertz (1973: 33 ff.) has argued that human physiology and neurology developed in conjunction with the first cultural activities, and Middleton (1990:17 n.27) concluded that human "instincts were culturally formed."

This view of culture argues that people living apart from one another develop unique cultures. However, elements of different cultures can easily spread from one group of people to another. Culture is dynamic and can be taught and learned, making it a potentially rapid form of adaptation to change in physical conditions. Anthropologists view culture as not only a product of biological evolution but as a supplement to it; it can be seen as the main means of human adaptation to the natural world.

This view of culture as a symbolic system with adaptive functions, which varies from place to place, led anthropologists toconceive of different cultures as defined by distinct patterns (or structures) of enduring, although arbitrary, conventional sets of meaning, which took concrete form in a variety of artifacts such as myths and rituals, tools, the design of housing, and the planning of villages. Anthropologists thus distinguish between material culture and symbolic culture, not only because each reflects different kinds of human activity, but also because they constitute different kinds of data that require different methodologies to study.

This view of culture, which came to dominate between World War I and World War II, implied that each culture was bounded and had to be understood as a whole, on its own terms. The result is a belief in cultural relativism.

Level of Abstraction

Another element of culture that is important for a clear understanding of the concept is level of abstraction. Culture ranges from the concrete, cultural object (e.g., the understanding of a work of art) to micro-level interpersonal interactions (e.g., the socialization of a child by his/her parents) to a macro-level influence on entire societies (e.g., the Puritanical roots of the U.S. that can be used to justify the exportation of democracy â€" a lÃ¡ the Iraq War; see Wald 2003). It is important when trying to understand the concept of culture to keep in mind that the concept can have multiple levels of meaning.

The Artificiality of Cultural Categorization

One of the more important points to understand about culture is that it is an artificial categorization of elements of social life. As Griswold (2004) puts it, there is no such thing as culture or society out there in the real world. There are only people who work, joke, raise children, love, think, worship, fight, and behave in a wide variety of ways. To speak of culture as one thing and society as another is to make an analytical distinction between two different aspects of human experience. One way to think of the distinction is that culture designates the expressive aspect of human existence, whereas society designates the relational (and often practical) aspect. (Griswold 2004:4)

In the above quote, Griswold emphasizes that culture is distinct from society but affirms that this distinction is, like all classifications, artificial. Humans do not experience culture in a separate or distinct way from society. Culture and society are truly two-sides of a coin; a coin that makes up social life. Yet the distinction between the two, while artificial, is useful for a number of reasons. For instance, the distinction between culture and society is of particular use when exploring how norms and values are transmitted from generation to generation and answering the question of cultural conflict between people of different cultural backgrounds (say, Japanese and United Statesians).

In summary, culture is a complex component of social life, distinct from the interactions of society in particular because it adds meanings to relationships. Culture is also multi-leveled in that it can range from concrete cultural objects to broad social norms.

Subcultures & Countercultures

A subculture is a culture shared and actively participated in by a minority of people within a broader culture.A culture often contains numerous subcultures. Subcultures incorporate large parts of the broader cultures of which they are part, but in specifics they may differ radically. Some subcultures achieve such a status that they acquire a name of their own. Examples of subcultures could include: bikers, military culture, and Star Trek fans (trekkers or trekkies).

A counterculture is a subculture with the addition that some of its beliefs, values, or norms challenge those of the main culture of which it is part. Examples of countercultures in the U.S. could include: the hippie movement of the 1960s, the green movement, and feminist groups.

Ethnocentrism & Cultural Relativism

Ethnocentrism is the tendency to look at the world primarily from the perspective of one's own culture. Many claim that ethnocentrism occurs in every society; ironically, ethnocentrism may be something that all cultures have in common.

The term was coined by William Graham Sumner, a social evolutionist and professor of Political and Social Science at Yale University. He defined it as the viewpoint that "oneâ€(tm)s own group is the center of everything," against which all other groups are judged. Ethnocentrism often entails the belief that one's own race or ethnic group is the most important and/or that some or all aspects of its culture are superior to those of other groups. Within this ideology, individuals will judge other groups in relation to their own particular ethnic group or culture, especially with concern to language, behaviour, customs, and religion. It also involves an incapacity to acknowledge that cultural differentiation does not imply inferiority of those groups who are ethnically distinct from one's own.

Cultural relativism is the belief that the concepts and values of a culture cannot be fully translated into, or fully understood in, other languages; that a specific cultural artifact (e.g. a ritual) has to be understood in terms of the larger symbolic system of which it is a part.

An example of cultural relativism might include slang words from specific languages (and even from particular dialects within a language). For instance, the word tranquilo in Spanish translates directly to 'calm' in English. However, it can be used in many more ways than just as an adjective (e.g., the seas are calm). Tranquilo can be a command or suggestion encouraging another to calm down. It can also be used to ease tensions in an argument (e.g., everyone relax) or to indicate a degree of self-composure (e.g., I'm calm). There is not a clear English translation of the word, and in order to fully comprehend its many possible uses a cultural relativist would argue that it would be necessary to fully immerse oneself in cultures where the word is used.

Theories of Culture

While there are numerous theoretical approaches employed to understand 'culture', this chapter uses just one model to illustrate how sociologists understand the concept. The model is an integrationist model advocated by Ritzer (Ritzer & Goodman 2004:357). Ritzer proposes four highly interdependent elements in his sociological model: a macro-objective component (e.g., society, law, bureaucracy), a micro-objective component (e.g., patterns of behavior and human interaction), a macro-subjective component (e.g., culture, norms, and values), and a microsubjective component (e.g., perceptions, beliefs). This model is of particular use in understanding the role of culture in sociological research because it presents two axes for understanding culture: one ranging from objective (society) to subjective (culture and cultural interpretation); the other ranging from the macro-level (norms) to the micro-level (individual level beliefs).

If used for understanding a specific cultural phenomenon, like the displaying of abstract art (Halle 1993), this model depicts how cultural norms can influence individual behavior. This model also posits that individual level values, beliefs, and behaviors can, in turn, influence the macro-level culture. This is, in fact, part of what David Halle finds: while there are certainly cultural differences based on class, they are not unique to class. Displayers of abstract art tend not only to belong to the upper-class, but also are employed in art-production occupations. This would indicate that there are multiple levels of influence involved in art tastes â€" both broad cultural norms and smaller level occupational norms in addition to personal preferences.

The Function of Culture

Culture can also be seen to play a specific function in social life. According to Griswold, "The sociological analysis of culture begins at the premise that culture provides orientation, wards off chaos, and directs behavior toward certain lines of action and away from others" (Griswold 2004:24). Griswold reiterates this point by explaining that, "Groups and societies need collective representations of themselves to inspire sentiments of unity and mutual support, and culture fulfills this need" (p. 59). In other words, culture can have a certain utilitarian function â€" the maintenance of order as the result of shared understandings and meanings (this understanding of culture is similar to the Symbolic Interactionist understanding of society).

Cultural Change

The belief that culture is symbolically coded and can thus be taught from one person to another means that cultures, although bounded, can change. Cultures are both predisposed to change and resistant to it. Resistance can come from habit, religion, and the integration and interdependence of cultural traits. For example, men and women have complementary roles in many cultures. One sex might desire changes that affect the other, as happened in the second half of the 20th century in western cultures (see women's movement), while the other sex may be resistant to that change (possibly in order to maintain a power imbalance in their favor).

Cultural change can have many causes, including: the environment, inventions, and contact with other cultures. For example, the end of the last ice age helped lead to the invention of agriculture. Some inventions that affected Western culture in the 20th century were the birth control pill, television, and the Internet.

Several understandings of how cultures change come from Anthropology. For instance, in diffusion theory, the form of something moves from one culture to another, but not its meaning. For example, the ankh symbol originated in Egyptian culture but has diffused to numerous cultures. It's original meaning may have been lost, but it is now used by many practitioners of New Age Religion as an arcane symbol of power or life forces. A variant of the diffusion theory, stimulus diffusion, refers to an element of one culture leading to an invention in another.

Contact between cultures can also result in acculturation. Acculturation has different meanings, but in this context refers to replacement of the traits of one culture with those of another, such as what happened with many Native American Indians. Related processes on an individual level are assimilation and transculturation, both of which refer to adoption of a different culture by an individual.

One sociological approach to cultural change has been outlined by Griswold (2004). Griswold points out that it may seem as though culture comes from individuals "which, for certain elements of cultural change, is true" but there is also the larger, collective, and long-lasting culture that cannot have been the creation of single individuals as it predates and post-dates individual humans and contributors to culture. The author presents a sociological perspective to address this conflict,

Sociology suggests an alternative to both the unsatisfying it has always been that way view at one extreme and the unsociological individual genius view at the other. This alternative posits that culture and cultural works are collective, not individual, creations. We can best understand specific cultural objects... by seeing them not as unique to their creators but as the fruits of collective production, fundamentally social in their genesis. (p. 53)

In short, Griswold argues that culture changes through the contextually dependent and socially situated actions of individuals; macro-level culture influences the individual who, in turn, can influence that same culture. The logic is a bit circular, but illustrates how culture can change over time yet remain somewhat constant.

It is, of course, important to recognize here that Griswold is talking about cultural change and not the actual origins of culture (as in, "there was no culture and then, suddenly, there was"). Because Griswold does not explicitly distinguish between the origins of cultural change and the origins of culture, it may appear as though Griswold is arguing here for the origins of culture and situating these origins in society. This is neither accurate nor a clear representation of sociological thought on this issue. Culture, just like society, has existed since the beginning of humanity (humans being social and cultural). Society and culture co-exist because humans have social relations and meanings tied to those relations (e.g. brother, lover, friend; see, for instance, Leakey 1994). Culture as a super-phenomenon has no real beginning except in the sense that humans (homo sapiens) have a beginning. This, then, makes the question of the origins of culture moot â€" it has existed as long as we have, and will likely exist as long as we do. Cultural change, on the other hand, is a matter that can be questioned and researched, as Griswold does.

Cultural Sociology: Researching Culture

How do sociologists study culture? One approach to studying culture falls under the label 'cultural sociology', which combines the study of culture with cultural understandings of phenomena.

Griswold (2004) explains how cultural sociologists approach their research,

> ...if one were to try to understand a certain group of people, one would look for the expressive forms through which they represent themselves to themselves... The sociologist can come at this collective representation process from the other direction, from the analysis of a particular cultural object, as well; if we were to try to understand a cultural object, we would look for how it is used by some group as representing that group. (p. 59)

In other words, because of the perspective of cultural sociologists, their approach to studying culture involves looking for how people make meaning in their lives out of the different cultural elements that surround them.

A particularly clear example of cultural sociology is the study of the Village-Northton by Elijah Anderson (1990). Anderson is interested in a number of things in his book, but two cultural components stand out. First, Anderson is looking at the border of two culturally and socio-economically distinct neighborhoods. Because these two neighborhoods are distinct yet share a border, this research site provides numerous opportunities for the exploration of culture. Not surprisingly, cultural conflict is an optimal scenario for the exploration of culture and cultural interaction. Additionally, Anderson is interested in how individuals in these neighborhoods negotiate interpersonal interactions, especially when individuals from the Village (middle to upper-middle class and predominantly white) are forced to interact with members of the Northton area (lower class and poor blacks).

Andersonâmethodology is a combination of participant observation and interviews. But when viewed in light of the quote above by Griswold, it becomes apparent that Andersonâ€(tm)s focus in these interviews and observations is self-presentation (also see impression management). Anderson regularly describes the individuals he interviews and observes in light of their clothing, behavior, attitudes, beliefs, and opinions. As he interacts with more and more individuals, patterns begin to develop. Specifically, individuals dressed in certain outfits behave in similar ways. For instance, those dressed in business attire (even when walking their dogs) â€" the yuppies â€" have particular perspectives on the future of the Village: they are interested in increasing property values in order to maximize their investment. Another example of cultural significance of clothing is older black men who intentionally wear button-up shirts and ties because of the cultural symbolism of that particular outfit: it signifies to the cultural outsider that the wearer is refined and distinct from the athletic-suit-wearing drug dealers who control numerous Northton corners.

Ultimately, Andersonâgoal is to develop a sort of typology of streetwise individuals: people who can manage awkward and uncomfortable interpersonal interactions on the street in such a fashion that they emerge from the interactions unharmed. While he does develop a loose description of these types of individuals, the important part to understand here is how he explores these aspects of culture. First, he found a cultural border that presented cultural conflict. When individuals have to negotiate meaning publicly, it makes it much easier for the sociologist to tease out culture. Additionally, Anderson observed both the transmission of culture from generation to generation (i.e., socialization, but also the self-representation that is provided by cultural expressions (clothing, behavior, etc). Through years of observation, Anderson gained a familiarity with these elements of culture that allowed him to understand how they interacted.

In summary, cultural sociology (or the study of culture) is performed by examining how individuals express themselves to others and is likely facilitated by finding cultural boundaries where cultural expression is important to successful social functioning.

Sociology of culture

'"Cultural sociology" redirects here. You may also be looking for Cultural Sociology (journal).The sociology of culture concerns culture—usually understood as the ensemble of symbolic codes used by a society —as it is manifested in society. For Georg Simmel, culture referred to "the cultivation of individuals through the agency of external forms which have been objectified in the course of history".[1] Culture in the sociological field can be defined as the ways of thinking, the ways of acting, and the material objects that together shape a people's way of life. Culture can be any of two types, non-material culture or material culture.[2]

Cultural sociology first emerged in Weimar Germany, where sociologists such as Alfred Weber used the term Kultursoziologie (cultural sociology). Cultural sociology was then "reinvented" in the English-speaking world as a product of the "cultural turn" of the 1960s, which ushered in structuralist and postmodern approaches to social science. This type of cultural sociology may loosely be regarded as an approach incorporating cultural analysis and critical theory. Cultural sociologists tend to reject scientific methods, instead hermeneutically focusing on words, artifacts and symbols.

"Culture" has since become an important concept across many branches of sociology, including resolutely scientific fields like social stratification and social network analysis. As a result, there has been a recent influx of quantitative sociologists to the field. Thus there is now a growing group of sociologists of culture who are, confusingly, not cultural sociologists. These scholars reject the abstracted post-structural aspects of cultural sociology, and instead look for a theoretical backing in the more scientific vein of social psychology and cognitive science.

Cultural sociology is one of the largest sections of the American Sociological Association. The British establishment of cultural studies means the latter is often taught as a loosely-distinct discipline in UK.

Development of Sociology in Culture

Early researchers and development of cultural sociology

The sociology of culture grew from the intersection between sociology, as shaped by early theorists like Marx, Durkheim, and Weber, and with the growing discipline of anthropology where researchers pioneered ethnographic strategies for describing and analyzing a variety of cultures around the world. Part of the legacy of the early development of the field is still felt in the methods (much of cultural sociological research is qualitative) in the theories (a variety of critical approaches to sociology are central to current research communities) and substantive focus of the field. For instance, relationships between popular culture, political control, and social class were early and lasting concerns in the field.

Karl Marx

As a major contributor to the Conflict Theory, Marx's ideas also dealt with culture. Marx's belief of culture is that the most powerful members of a society are those who live in the ruling class. These members set up the culture of a society in order to provide the best interests to that society. He has also talked about how a society's economic status determines their values and ideologies.

Émile Durkheim

Durkheim held the belief that culture has many relationships to society which include:

- ✓ **Logical-** Power over individuals belongs to certain cultural categories, and beliefs such as God.
- ✓ **Functional-** Certain rites and myths create and build up social order by having more people create strong beliefs. The greater the number of people who believe strongly in these myths more will the social order be strengthened.
- ✓ **Historical-** Culture had its origins in society, and from those experiences came evolution into things such as classification systems.

Max Weber

Weber innovated the idea of a status group as a certain type of subculture. Status groups are based on things such as: race, ethnicity, religion, region, occupation, gender, sexual preference, etc. These groups live a certain lifestyle based on different values and norms. They are a culture within a culture, hence the label subculture. Weber also had the idea that people were motivated by their material and ideal interests, which include things such as preventing one from going to hell. Weber also explains that people use symbols to express their spirituality, and that symbols are used to express the spiritual side of real events, and that ideal interests are derived from symbols.

Georg Simmel

For Simmel, culture refers to 'the cultivation of individuals through the agency of external forms which have been objectified in the course of history'.[3] Simmel presented his analyses within a context of 'form' and 'content'. Sociological concept and analysis can be viewed.

The Elements of Culture

- ✓ **Symbols:** Anything that carries particular meaning recognized by people who share the same culture.
- ✓ **Language:** A system of symbols that allows people to communicate with one another.
- ✓ **Values:** Culturally defined standards of desirability, goodness, beauty and many other things that serve as broad guidelines for social living.
- ✓ **Beliefs:** Specific statements that people hold to be true.
- ✓ **Norms:** Rules and expectations by which a society guides the behavior of its members. The two types of norms are mores and folkways. Mores are norms that are widely observed and have a great moral significance. Folkways are norms for routine, casual interaction.

Anthropology

Anthropologists lay claim to the establishment of modern uses of the culture concept as defined by Edward Burnett Tylor in the mid-19th century. Some of the 20th century scholars include Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown, and Mauss.

Major Areas of Research in Sociology of Culture

Theoretical Constructs in Bourdieu's Sociology of Culture

The study of culture has complex relationships that provide the societal information in the given society. This is the reason why Tylor explained it as complex whole as it provides the multi-dimension societal factors that is affected by the inter and intrarelationships of man in the social environment.

The educational learning process of human beings in given societal information. This can be learn in the parents later on revolves in the family then to the tribal community as it could adopt the sensory motors of the child in the environment. Basically, in the pedagogy of education the learning process is confined in the cognitive domain or simply the intelligence or the mental ability of the human beings. It directs the physiological response of the brain to mentally process that dictated in the sensory system as primarily directed by sight; felt by touch; listen by the sounds and taste by the smell. The mental capability must go hand in hand with the emotional or psychological attachment including intimacy and love.

Primarily, the concept of culture revolves in the human society on its belief, art, morals, custom and other capabilities such as values, norms, traditions, mores, folkways, language, race, ethnicity, technology, fads, and laws. These social variables provide the unique definition of culture for the understanding and adjustment of life in a given societal condition.

This article revolves the discussion on important concept of culture such as values, beliefs, norms, language, folkways, mores, laws, traditions and other similar concepts that will provide better understanding about the whole social experiences of man in the society.

1. Tradition as a general term refers to the customs, rituals, belief, folklore, habits in a given ethnic group. When we speak about culture, the usual key concept is still on tradition because of the universality of the concept on the social experiences derive from that community.
2. Folkways are the expected behavior being practiced in certain ethnic groups. They provide us the set of expected behavior to follow within the customs and habits in the ethnic groups. A good example of the folkways in the community is the courtship and dating, which prescribed certain behavioral practices that need to be followed as it is distinctly complement the kind of custom and habits they have in that ethnic group.
3. Beliefs are the ideas, viewpoints and attitudes of the particular group of society. They are consists of fables, proverbs, myths, folklore ,traditions, superstition, education and etc. that influence the ideas, values, emotions, perceptions and attitude of the members of the society. They

also think and decide on particular course of action which they believe conform on the sets social experience in the society.

4. Values are the common ethical standards in a civilized society wherein group members have the ability to distinguish what is right or wrong. These are approved sets of action to follow as part of societal life and violation of this act may require sanctions and punishment within the family or institutions of the society.
5. Norms are the proper conduct of social behavior that should be followed in the society. Norms are unquestionable standards of what society consider as good and proper for social behavior. There are prescribing societal standards that should be followed because these are appropriate, legal, ethical and right actions. However, those who would not follow the set of societal standards are considered illegal, immoral, wrong, bad and improper.
6. Language is a form of communication that represents the spoken and written words to convey information to an individual or group of people. The language also the best way to communicate specific group of people who have decipher and construct new form symbolic dialect that have been passed by one generation to another. These are in written forms, words, numbers even non-verbal communication such as facial expression and body movements and other sign languages.
7. Mores are the long-established customs and traditions that have bearing in moral and ethical values of the society. They are the accepted customs of the society that prohibits following such as incest, infidelity or sex abuse.
8. Laws are the rules, regulation and guiding policies of societal institutions. The violation of the laws means sanction or punishment for some wrongful acts by the individual such as homicide, murder, abortion, rape, robbery and other criminal acts.
9. Basically, these are the common concepts as applied in sociology and anthropology to further study the nature of

man and society. It is usually the understanding of the social experiences as man interacts in the society. Generally, it is the way of life that would focus the how the people think, act and produce materials in its natural habitat. On the other hand, the sense of culture reflects the human products such as audio- visual arts and literary arts that revolved in the past history and civilization of the ethnic society. The grouping as one tribal community interacted to form a distinct and unique culture that defines them later as race.

Current Research

Computer-mediated Communication as Culture

Computermediated communication (CMC) is the process of sending messagesprimarily, but not limited to text messagesthrough the direct use by participants of computers and communication networks. By restricting the definition to the direct use of computers in the communication process, you have to get rid of the communication technologies that rely upon computers for switching technology (such as telephony or compressed video), but do not require the users to interact directly with the computer system via a keyboard or similar computer interface. To be mediated by computers in the sense of this project, the communication must be done by participants fully aware of their interaction with the computer technology in the process of creating and delivering messages. Given the current state of computer communications and networks, this limits CMC to primarily text-based messaging, while leaving the possibility of incorporating sound, graphics, and video images as the technology becomes more sophisticated.

Cultural Institutions Studies

Cultural activities are institutionalized; the focus on institutional settings leads to the investigation "of activities in the cultural sector, conceived as historically evolved societal forms of organising the conception, production, distribution, propagation, interpretation, reception, conservation and maintenance of specific cultural goods".[9] Cultural Institutions Studies is therefore a specific approach within the sociology of culture.

Key Figures

Key figures in today's cultural sociology include: Julia Adams, Jeffrey Alexander, John Carroll, Henning Eichberg, Ron Eyerman, Andreas Glaeser, Wendy Griswold, Michele Lamont, Stjepan Mestrovic, Margaret Somers, Yasemin Soysal,Lynette Spillman, Ann Swidler, Diane Vaughan, Annette Lareau, Diana Crane, Karin Knorr-Cetina, Eva Illouz, Dan Sperber, and Sarah Gatson.

Culture

The concept of culture is among the most widely used notions in sociology. Normally,one can presume culture to be equivalent to higher things of the mind such as art,literature, music and painting. However, in the perspective of sociologist it goes beyondsuch activities. Culture refers to the ways of life of the members of society, or of groups within a society. It includes how they dress, their marriage customs, language and family life, their patterns of work, religious ceremonies and leisure pursuits (Giddens, 2005).Cultural sociology is one of the main major and most popular areas of the American Sociological Association. The sociology of culture developed from the intersectionbetween sociology, as shaped by early theorists like Marx, Durkheim, and Weber, andwith the rising specialization of anthropology where researchers lead the way of ethnographic approach for unfolding and examining different diversity of cultures aroundthe world (Macionis and Gerber, 2010). Culture can be conceptually distinguished fromsociety but there are very close connections between these notions. A Society is asystem of interrelationships which connects individuals together. All societies are unitedby the fact that their members are organized in structured social relationships accordingto a unique culture. No cultures could exist without societies. But equally, no societ

The simplest way to think about culture is to think about the distinction between nature (our biology and genetics) and nurture (our environment and surroundings that also shape our identities). Because of our biology and genetics, we have a particular form and we have certain abilities. But our biological nature does not exclusively determine who we are. For that, we need culture. Culture is the non-biological or social aspects of human life, basically anything that is learned by humans is part of culture.

The two avatars to the right help illustrate this idea. The avatar wearing nothing but shorts comes close to representing nothing but nature. The form of the avatar reveals several things about this person, but they are not necessarily tied to a specific culture. For instance, the fact that he has lighter colored skin suggests he has Caucasian ancestry, but that is biological, not social. Otherwise, there is very little about this avatar that reflects culture (the exceptions are his shorts and hair stylings, which do, in fact, reflect culture). The avatar wearing the colorful vest and pants stands in stark contrast to the other avatar. This second avatar is reflective of a particular culture. The colors of the vest - red, white, and blue - in the specific pattern they are in (stars and stripes) suggests this avatar is in some way associated with the United States of America. The cut of the avatar's top and pants suggest a particular time period - the late 1960s or early 1970s. The backdrop, with the wordsRock the Vote scrawled across it, also suggest something about the avatar - perhaps that he is a musician participating in the Rock the Vote movement. Additionally, the avatar's hairstyle, dreadlocks, also suggest something about this second avatar as dreadlocks are prominent only in certain sub-cultures. In short, the first avatar is mostly a-cultural or lacking in culture while the second avatar is heavily enmeshed in culture.

Generally speaking, the following elements of social life are considered to be representative of human culture: "stories, beliefs, media, ideas, works of art, religious practices, fashions, rituals, specialized knowledge, and common sense" (p. xvi).[1]

Yet, examples of culture do not, in themselves, present a clear understanding of the concept of culture; culture is more than the object or behavior. Culture also includes,…norms, values, beliefs, or expressive symbols. Roughly, norms are the way people behave in a given society, values are what they hold dear, beliefs are how they think the universe operates, and expressive symbols are representations, often representations of social norms, values, and beliefs themselves. (p. 3)[1]

To summarize, culture encompasses objects and symbols, the meaning given to those objects and symbols, and the norms, values, and beliefs that pervade social life. "The definition is understood to include two elements - that which differentiates one group or society from others and the concept of acquired or learned behavior". (p. 43)[2]

Keep in mind that, in any given society, culture is not necessarily rigid and totally uniform. As is the case with most elements of social life, culture is relatively stable (thus it is functional in the structural-functionalist sense) but at the same time contested (in the conflict sense).[3] Culture is in flux, especially in our modern world in which different cultures are in constant contact with each other.

'High' Culture

Ballet, traditionally considered high culture.

Many people today think of culture in the way that it was thought of in Europe during the 18th and early 19th centuries. This concept of culture reflected inequalities within European societies and their colonies around the world. This understanding of culture equates culture with civilization and contrasts both with nature or non-civilization. According to this understanding of culture, some countries are more civilized than others, and some people are more cultured than others. Theorists like Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) believed that culture is simply that which is created by "the best that has been thought and said in the world" (p. 6). Anything that doesn't fit into this category is labeled as chaos or anarchy. From this perspective, culture is closely tied to cultivation, which is the progressive refinement of human behavior.

In practice, culture referred to elite goods and activities such as haute cuisine, high fashion or haute couture, museum-caliber art and classical music. The word cultured referred to people who knew about and took part in these activities. For example, someone who used culture in this sense might argue that classical music is more refined than music by working-class people, such as jazz or the indigenous music traditions of aboriginal peoples.

People who use culture in this way tend not to use it in the plural. They believe that there are not distinct cultures, each with their own internal logic and values, but rather only a single standard of refinement to which all groups are held accountable. Thus people who differ from those who believe themselves to be cultured in this sense are not usually understood as having a different culture; they are understood as being uncultured.

The Origins of Culture

Chinese Opera, a culture tradition quite distinct from European Opera.Attentive to the theory of evolution, anthropologists assumed that all human beings are equally evolved, and the fact that all humans have cultures must in some way be a result of human evolution. They were also wary of using biological evolution to explain differences between specific cultures - an approach that either was a form of, or legitimized forms of, racism. Anthropologists believed biological evolution produced an inclusive notion of culture, a concept that anthropologists could apply equally to non-literate and literate societies, or to nomadic and to sedentary societies. They argued that through the course of their evolution, human beings evolved a universal human capacity to classify experiences, and encode and communicate them symbolically. Since these symbolic systems were learned and taught, they began to develop independently of biological evolution (in other words, one human being can learn a belief, value, or way of doing something from another, even if they are not biologically related). That this capacity for symbolic thinking and social learning is a product of human evolution confounds older arguments about nature versus nurture. Thus, Clifford Geertz argued that human physiology and neurology developed in conjunction with the first cultural activities, and Middleton (1990:17 n.27) concluded that human "instincts wereculturally formed."

This view of culture argues that people living apart from one another develop unique cultures. However, elements of different cultures can easily spread from one group of people to another. Culture is dynamic and can be taught and learned, making it a potentially rapid form of adaptation to changes in physical conditions. Anthropologists view culture as not only a product of biological evolution but as a supplement to it; it can be seen as the main means of human adaptation to the natural world.

This view of culture as a symbolic system with adaptive functions, which varies from place to place, led anthropologists to conceive of different cultures as defined by distinct patterns (or structures) of enduring, although arbitrary, conventional sets of meaning, which took concrete form in a variety of artifacts such as myths and rituals, tools, the design of housing, and the planning of villages. Anthropologists thus distinguish between material culture and symbolic culture, not only because each reflects different kinds of human activity, but also because they constitute different kinds of data that require different methodologies to study.

This view of culture, which came to dominate anthropology between World War I and World War II, implied that each culture was bounded and had to be understood as a whole, on its own terms. The result is a belief in cultural relativism, which suggests that there are no "better" or "worse" cultures, just different cultures.

Recent research suggests that human culture has reversed the causal direction suggested above and influence human evolution.[6] One well-known illustration of this is the rapid spread of genetic instructions that left on a gene that produces a protein that allows humans to digest lactose.[6] This adaptation spread rapidly in Europe around 4,000 BCE with the domestication of mammals, as humans began harvesting their milk for consumption. Prior to this adaptation, the gene that produces a protein allowing for the digestion of lactose was switched after children were weaned. Thus, the change in culture - drinking milk from other mammals - eventually led to changes in human genetics. Genetics has, therefore, resulted in culture, which is now acting back on genetics.

Level of Abstraction

Another element of culture that is important for a clear understanding of the concept is level of abstraction. Culture ranges from the concrete, cultural object (e.g., the understanding of a work of art) to micro-level interpersonal interactions (e.g., the socialization of a child by his/her parents) to a macro-level influence on entire societies (e.g., the Puritanical roots of the U.S. that can be used to justify the exportation of democracy – a lá the Iraq War). It is important when trying to understand the concept of culture to keep in mind that the concept can have multiple levels of meaning.

The Artificiality of Cultural Categorization

One of the more important points to understand about culture is that it is an artificial categorization of elements of social life. As Griswold puts it. There is no such thing as culture or society out there in the real world. There are only people who work, joke, raise children, love, think, worship, fight, and behave in a wide variety of ways. To speak of culture as one thing and society as another is to make an analytical distinction between two different aspects of human experience. One way to think of the distinction is that culture designates the expressive aspect of human existence, whereas society designates the relational (and often practical) aspect.

In the above quote, Griswold emphasizes that culture is distinct from society but affirms that this distinction is, like all classifications, artificial. Humans do not experience culture in a separate or distinct way from society. Culture and society are truly two-sides of a coin; a coin that makes up social life. Yet the distinction between the two, while artificial, is useful for a number of reasons. For instance, the distinction between culture and society is of particular use when exploring how norms and values are transmitted from generation to generation and answering the question of cultural conflict between people of different cultural backgrounds (say, the Japanese and Americans).

Subcultures & Countercultures

Trekkies (or fans of Star Trek) are a subculture; they share specific understandings and meanings that those outside their subculture may not understand.

A subculture is a culture shared and actively participated in by a minority of people within a broader culture. A culture often contains numerous subcultures. Subcultures incorporate large parts of the broader cultures of which they are part, but in specifics they may differ radically. Some subcultures achieve such a status that they acquire a name of their own. Examples of subcultures could include: bikers, military culture, and Star Trek fans (trekkers or trekkies).

The woman and children in this photo are members ofThe Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (or FLDS), which advocates the practice polygamy, making members part of a countercultural group (polygamy is illegal in the United States).

A counterculture is a subculture with the addition that some of its beliefs, values, or norms challenge or even contradict those of the main culture of which it is part. Examples of countercultures in the U.S. could include: the hippie movement of the 1960s, the green movement, polygamists, and and feminist groups.

Subcultures bring together like-minded individuals who feel neglected by societal standards and allow them to develop a sense of identity.[9] Subcultures can be distinctive because of the age, ethnicity, class, location, and/or gender of the members. The qualities that determine a subculture as distinct may be linguistic, aesthetic, religious, political, sexual, geographical or a combination of factors. Members of a subculture often signal their membership through a distinctive and symbolic use of style, which includes fashions, mannerisms, and argot.

Ethnocentrism is the tendency to look at the world primarily from the perspective of one's own culture. Many claim that ethnocentrism occurs in every society; ironically, ethnocentrism may be something that all cultures have in common.

The term was coined by William Graham Sumner, a social evolutionist and professor of Political and Social Science at Yale University. He defined it as, "The sentiment of cohesion, internal comradeship, and devotion to the in-group, which carries with it a sense of superiority to any out-group and readiness to defend the interests of the in-group against the out-group."Ethnocentrism often entails the belief that one's own race or ethnic group is the most important and/or that some or all aspects of its culture are superior to those of other groups. Within this ideology, individuals will judge other groups in relation to their own particular ethnic group or culture, especially with concern to language, behavior, customs, and religion. It also involves incapacity to acknowledge that cultural differentiation does not imply inferiority of those groups who are ethnically distinct from one's own.

Sociologists study ethnocentrism because of its role in various elements of social life, ranging from politics to terrorism. This is also an area where sociologists often become advocates as they attempt to reveal ethnocentric biases to those who hold them with the aim of helping people realize that such biases are seldom beneficial to social solidarity and peaceful human relations.

Cultural relativism is the belief that the concepts and values of a culture cannot be fully translated into, or fully understood in, other languages; that a specific cultural artifact (e.g. a ritual) has to be understood in terms of the larger symbolic system of which it is a part.

An example of cultural relativism might include slang words from specific languages (and even from particular dialects within a language). For instance, the word tranquilo in Spanish translates directly to 'calm' in English. However, it can be used in many more ways than just as an adjective (e.g., the seas are calm). Tranquilo can be a command or suggestion encouraging another to calm down. It can also be used to ease tensions in an argument (e.g., everyone relax) or to indicate a degree of self-composure (e.g., I'm calm). There is not a clear English translation of the word, and in order to fully comprehend its many possible uses a cultural relativist would argue that it would be necessary to fully immerse one in cultures where the word is used.

Theories of Culture

While there are numerous theoretical approaches employed to understand 'culture', this chapter uses just one model to illustrate how sociologists understand the concept. The model is an integrationist model advocated by Ritzer. Ritzer proposes four highly interdependent elements in his sociological model: a macro-objective component (e.g., society, law, bureaucracy), a micro-objective component (e.g., patterns of behavior and human interaction), a macro-subjective component (e.g., culture, norms, and values), and a micro-subjective component (e.g., perceptions, beliefs). This model is of particular use in understanding the role of culture in sociological research because it presents two axes for understanding culture: one ranging from objective (society) to subjective (culture and cultural interpretation); the other ranging from the macro-level (norms) to the micro-level (individual level beliefs).

If used for understanding a specific cultural phenomenon, like the displaying of abstract art, this model depicts how cultural norms can influence individual behavior. This model also posits that individual level values, beliefs, and behaviors can, in turn, influence the macro-level culture. This is, in fact, part of what David Halle finds: while there are certainly cultural differences based on class, they are not unique to class. Displayers of abstract art tend not only to belong to the upperclass, but also are employed in art-production occupations. This would indicate that there are multiple levels of influence involved in art tastes both broad cultural norms and smaller level occupational norms in addition to personal preferences.

The Function of Culture

Culture can also be seen to play a specific function in social life. According to Griswold, "The sociological analysis of culture begins at the premise that culture provides orientation, wards off chaos, and directs behavior toward certain lines of action and away from others." Griswold reiterates this point by explaining that, "Groups and societies need collective representations of themselves to inspire sentiments of unity and mutual support, and culture fulfills this need." In other words, culture can have a certain utilitarian function the maintenance of order as the result of shared understandings and meanings.

Cultural Change

The belief that culture is symbolically coded and can thus is taught from one person to another means that cultures, although bounded, can change. Cultures are both predisposed to change and resistant to it. Resistance can come from habit, religion, and the integration and interdependence of cultural traits.For example, men and women have complementary roles in many cultures. One sex might desire changes that affect the other, as happened in the second half of the 20th century in western cultures (see, for example, the women's movement), while the other sex may be resistant to that change (possibly in order to maintain a power imbalance in their favor).

The symbol of the ankh has its roots in Egyptian religious practice, but the symbol diffused over time and was adopted by other groups, including pagans, as a religious symbol.

Cultural change can have many causes, includingthe environment, inventions, and contact with other cultures. For example, the end of the last ice age helped lead to the invention of agriculture. An invention that substantially changed culture was the development of the birth control pill, which changed women's attitudes toward sex. Prior to the introduction of the birth control pill, women were at a high risk of pregnancy as a result of sex. After the introduction of the pill, their risk of pregnancy was substantially reduced, increasing their willingness to engage in sexual activity outside of wedlock.[16] Likewise, the introduction of the television substantially reduced American involvement in civic life.

Several understandings of how cultures change come from Anthropology. For instance, in diffusion theory, the form of something moves from one culture to another, but not its meaning. For example, the ankh symbol originated in Egyptian culture but has diffused to numerous cultures. Its original meaning may have been lost, but it is now used by many practitioners of New Age Religion as an arcane symbol of power or life forces.

Contact between cultures can also result in acculturation. Acculturation has different meanings, but in this context refers to replacement of the traits of one culture with those of another, such as what happened with many Native American Indians as Europeans took over their lands. Many Native Americans were acculturated into European cultural norms, from religion to how to raise children. Related processes on an individual level are assimilation and transculturation, both of which refer to adoption of a different culture by an individual.

Griswold outlined another sociological approach to cultural change. Griswold points out that it may seem as though culture comes from individuals, but there is also the larger, collective, and long-lasting culture that cannot have been the creation of single individuals as it predates and post-dates individual humans and contributors to culture. The author presents a sociological perspective to address this conflict,

Sociology suggests an alternative to both the unsatisfying it has always been that way view at one extreme and the unsociological individual genius view at the other. This alternative posits that culture and cultural works are collective, not individual, creations. We can best understand specific cultural objects... by seeing them not as unique to their creators but as the fruits of collective production, fundamentally social in their genesis.

Griswold suggests, then, that culture changes through the contextually dependent and socially situated actions of individuals; macro-level culture influences the individual who, in turn, can influence that same culture. The logic is a bit circular, but it illustrates how culture can change over time yet remain somewhat constant.

It is, of course, important to recognize here that Griswold is talking about cultural change and not the actual origins of culture (as in, "there was no culture and then, suddenly, there was"). Because Griswold does not explicitly distinguish between the origins of cultural change and the origins of culture, it may appear as though Griswold is arguing here for the origins of culture and situating these origins in society. This is neither accurate nor a clear representation of sociological thought on this issue. Culture, just like society, has existed since the beginning of humanity (humans being social and cultural beings). Society and culture co-exist because humans have social relations and meanings tied to those relations (e.g. brother, lover, friend).[18] Culture as a super-phenomenon has no real beginning except in the sense that humans (homo sapiens) have a beginning. This, then, makes the question of the origins of culture moot it has existed as long as we have, and will likely exist as long as we do.

Culture

As Homo sapiens, evolved, several biological characteristics particularly favorable to the development of culture appeared in the species. These included erect posture; a favorable brain structure; stereoscopic vision; the structure of the hand, a flexible shoulder; and year round sexual receptivity on the part of the female. None of these biological characteristics alone, of course, accounts for the development of culture. Even in combination, all they guarantee is that human beings would be the most gifted members of the animal kingdom.

The distinctive human way of life that we call culture did not have a single definite beginning in time any more than human beings suddenly appearing on earth. Culture evolved slowly just as some anthropoids gradually took on more human form. Unmistakably, tools existed half a million years ago and might be considerably older. If, for convenience, we say that culture is 500,000 years old, it is still difficult day has appeared very recently.

The concept of culture was rigorously defined by E.B. Taylor in 1860s. According to him culture is the sum total of ideas, beliefs, values, material cultural equipments and non-material aspects which man makes as a member of society. Taylor's theme that culture is a result of human collectivity has been accepted by most anthropologists. Tylarian idea can be discerned in a modern definition of culture - culture is the man made part of environment (M.J. Herskovits).

From this, it follows that culture and society are separable only at the analytical level: at the actual existential level, they can be understood as the two sides of the same coin. Culture, on one hand, is an outcome of society and, on the other hand, society is able to survive and perpetuate itself because of the existence of culture. Culture is an ally of man in the sense that it enhances man's adaptability to nature. It is because of the adaptive value of culture that Herskovits states that culture is a screen between man and nature. Culture is an instrument by which man exploits the environment and shapes it accordingly.

In showing affection, the Maori rub noses; the Australians rub faces; the Chinese place nose to cheeks; the Westerners kiss; some groups practice spitting on the beloved. Or, consider this; American men are permitted to laugh in public but not to cry; Iroquois men are permitted to do neither in public; Italian men are permitted to do both. Since this is true, physiological factors have little to do with when men laugh and cry and when they do not do either. The variability of the human experience simply cannot be explained by making reference to human biology, or to the climate and geography. Instead, we must consider culture as the fabric of human society.

Culture can be conceived as a continuous, cumulative reservoir containing both material and non-material elements that are socially transmitted from generation to generation. Culture is continuous because cultural patterns transcend years, reappearing in successive generations. Culture is cumulative because each generation contributes to the reservoir.

An inherent paradox exists within the social heritage where culture tends to be both static and dynamic. Humans, once having internalized culture, attach positive value judgments to it and are more or less reluctant to change their established ways of life. Through most of recorded history men have apparently considered that change per say is undesirable and that the ideal condition is stability. The prospect of change can seem threatening, yet every human culture is subject to and does experience change. Those who speak of a generation gap portray two generations at odds with each other. According to this view, the parent generation embodied the dynamic dimension. We contend that if, in fact, a generation gap does exist in modern societies, and the differences are of degree and not of substance. Part of the social heritage of almost every modern society is the high value placed on progress. Parents encourage young people to seek progress, and progress is a form of social change. Debates between generations in modern societies are seldom about whether any change should occur. The debates are usually about how such change should occur, how fast it should occur, and which methods should be used for bringing about change.

Culture and Society Defined

Culture consists of the beliefs, behaviors, objects, and other characteristics common to the members of a particular group or society. Through culture, people and groups define themselves, conform to society's shared values, and contribute to society. Thus, culture includes many societal aspects: language, customs, values, norms, mores, rules, tools, technologies, products, organizations, and institutions. This latter term institution refers to clusters of rules and cultural meanings associated with specific social activities. Common institutions are the family, education, religion, work, and health care.

Popularly speaking, being culturedmeans being welleducated, knowledgeable of the arts, stylish, and well-mannered. High culturegenerally pursued by the upper classrefers to classical music, theater, fine arts, and other sophisticated pursuits. Members of the upper class can pursue high art because they havecultural capital, which means the professional credentials, education, knowledge, and verbal and social skills necessary to attain the “property, power, and prestige” to “get ahead” socially. Low culture, or popular culturegenerally pursued by the working and middle classesrefers to sports, movies, television sitcoms and soaps, and rock music. Remember that sociologist’s defineculture differently than they do cultured, high culture, low culture, and popular culture.

Sociologists define society as the people who interact in such a way as to share a common culture. The cultural bond may be ethnic or racial, based on gender, or due to shared beliefs, values, and activities. The term society can also have geographic meaning and refer to people who share a common culture in a particular location. For example, people living in arctic climates developed different cultures from those living in desert cultures. In time, a large variety of human cultures arose around the world.

Culture and society are intricately related. A culture consists of the “objects” of a society, whereas a society consists of the people who share a common culture. When the terms culture and society first acquired their current meanings, most people in the world worked and lived in small groups in the same locale. In today's world of 6 billion people, these terms have lost some of their usefulness because increasing numbers of people interact and share resources globally. Still, people tend to use culture and society in a more traditional sense: for example, being a part of a “racial culture” within the larger “U.S. society.”

Define Culture and discuss its features

Culture is one of the most important and basic concepts of sociology. In sociology, culture has a specific meaning. The anthropologists believe that the behavior, which is meant, is called culture. In other words the behavior which is transmitted to us by someone is called culture. The way of living, eating, wearing, and singing, dancing and talking is all parts of a culture.

In common, parlance, the word culture, is understood to mean beautiful, refined or interesting. In sociology, we use the word culture to denote acquired behavior, which are shared by and transmitted among the members of the society. In other words, culture is a system of learned behavior shared by and transmitted among the members of a group.

Characteristics of Culture

For a clear understanding of the concept of culture, it is necessary for us to know its main characteristics. Culture has several characteristics. Following are the main characteristics of culture.

1. Culture is learnt

Culture is not inherited biologically, but learnt socially by man. It is not an inborn tendency. There is no culture instinct as such culture is often called learned ways of behavior. Unlearned behavior such as closing the eyes while sleeping, the eye blinking reflex and so on are purely physiological and culture sharing hands or saying ‘namaskar’ or thanks and shaving and dressing on the other hand are culture. Similarly wearing clothes, combing the hair, wearing ornaments, cooking the food, drinking from a glass, eating from a plate or leaf, reading a newspaper, driving a car, enacting a role in drama, singing, worship etc. are always of behavior learnt by man culturally.

2. Cultural is Social

Culture does not exist in isolation neither it is an individual phenomenon. It is a product of society. It originates and develops through social interaction. It is shared by the members of society. No man can acquire culture without association with other human beings. Man becomes man only among men. It is the culture, which helps man to develop human qualities in a human environment. Deprivation is nothing but deprivation of human qualities.

3. Culture is shared

Culture in the sociological sense, is something shared. It is not something that an individual alone can possess. For example customs, tradition, beliefs, ideas, values, morals, etc.

are shared by people of a group or society. The invention of Arya Bhatta or Albert Einstein, Charaka or Charles Darwin, the literary, works of Kalidas or Keats, Dandi or Dante, the philosophical works of Cunfucius or Lao Tse, Shankaracharya or Swami Vivekananda, the artistic work of Kavi Verma or Raphael etc. are all shared by a large number of people. Culture is something adopted, used, believed practised or possessed by more than one person. It depends upon group life for its existence. (Robert Brerstedt)

4. Culture is Transmissive

Culture is capable of being transmitted from one generation to the next. Parents pass on culture traits to their children and them in turn to their children arid so on. Culture is trasmitted not trough genes but by means of language. Language is the main vehicle of culture. Language in its different forms like reading, writing and speaking makes it possible for the present generation to understand the achievements of earlier generations. But language itself is a part of culture. Once language is acquired it unfolds to the individual in wide field. Transmission of culture may take place by intution as well as by interaction.

5. Culture is Continuous and Cumulative

Culture exists, as a continuous process. In its historical growth, it tends to become cumulative. Culture is growing completely which includes in itself, the achievements of the past and present and makes provision for the future achievements of mankind. Culture may thus be conceived of as a kind of stream flowing down through the centuries from one generation to another. Hence, some sociologists like Lition called culture the social heritage of man. As Robert Brerstedt writes culture or the money of human race. It becomes difficult for us to imagine what society would be like without this accumulation of culture what lives would be without it.

6. Culture is Consistent and Interconnected

Culture, in its development has revealed tendency to be consistent. At the same time, different parts of culture are interconnected. For example the value system of a society, a society is closely connected with, its other aspects such as morality, religion, customs, traditions, beliefs and so on.

7. Culture is dynamic and Adaptive

Though culture is relatively stable, it is not altogether static. It is subject to slow but constant change. Change and growth are latent in culture. We find amazing growth in the present Indian culture when we compare it with the culture of the Vedic time. Hence, culture is dynamic.

Culture is responsive to the changing conditions of the physical world. It is adaptive. It also intervenes in the natural environment and helps man in his process of adjustment. Just as our house shelters us from the storm, so also does our culture help us from natural dangers and assist us to survive. Few of us indeed could survive without culture.

8. Culture is Gratifying

Culture provides proper opportunities, and prescribes means for the satisfaction of our needs and desires. These needs may be biological or social in nature. Our need for food, shelter and clothing and our desire for status, name, fame and money etc are all, for example, fulfilled according to the cultural ways. Culture determines and guides the varied activities of man. In fact culture is defined as the process through which human beings satisfy their wants.

9. Culture varies from Society to Society

Every society has a culture of its own. It differs from society to society. Culture of every society in unique to itself. Cultures are not uniform. Cultural elements such as customs, traditions, morals, ideals, values, ideologies, beliefs in practices, philosophies institutions, etc. are not uniform everywhere. Ways of eating, speaking, greeting, dressing, entertaining, living etc. of different sects differ significantly. Culture varies from time to time also. No culture ever remains constant or changeless. If Manu were to come back to see the Indian society today he would be bewildered to witness the vast changes that have taken place in our culture.

10. Culture is Super Organic and Ideational

Culture is sometimes called the super organic. By super organic Herbert Spencer meant that culture is neither organic nor inorganic in nature but above these two. The term implies the social meaning of physical objectives and physiological acts. The social meaning may be independent of physiological and physical properties and characteristics. For example, the social meaning of a national flag is not just a piece of colored cloth. The flag represents a nation. Similarly, priests and prisoners, professors and profanation, players, engineers and doctors, farmers and soldiers and others are not just biological beings. They are viewed in their society differently. Their social status and role can be understood only through culture.

Definitions of culture in sociology and anthropology

Culture is all around us, an inherit part of our social life as well as our personality and sense of subjectivity. However, culture, as cultural studies researcher Raymond Williams noted, is one of the most complex words in the English language. Culture is popularly used to denote as narrow sense that is usually related to the arts and humanities. In a broader sense, culture denotes the practices, beliefs and perceptions of a given society. Culture is additionally often opposed with "savagery", relating to something which is "cultured" as a product of a certain evolvement from a natural state. In the theoretical sense culture is often related as a system of structures with power relations running through them.

In social sciences, sociology, anthropology and cultural studies, there is hardly a consensus regarding the meaning of the term culture and various definitions of culture are in circulation. Researchers Kroeber and Kluckhohn (Culture: A Critical Review of Literature", 1952) gathered an array of various definitions of culture is sociology and anthropology and have divided them into six primary categories: 1. Descriptive definitions of culture which view culture as a total system of customs, beliefs, knowledge, laws, means of expression as so forth. 2. Historical definitions of culture which view culture as the continuation of generations. 3. Normative definitions of culture which related to value systems which construct social and personal behavior. 4. Psychological definitions of culture which stress culture's role in interpersonal relations. 5. Structural definitions of culture that focus on relational aspects of cultural components through abstraction. 6. socio-genetic definitions of culture which focus on the genesis and continued existence of a culture.

A different, more contemporary, way to distinguish definitions of culture is to note the way in which culture is theoretically perceived as either something which is opposed to materiality, technology and social structures from which culture is something different, or as a space of non-material ideas which are also, obviously, abstract. Other definitions of culture focus on its autonomy from social and economical structures.

This leads us to propose two fundamental understanding regarding definitions of culture: A. culture is an ensemble of practices, values and meanings common to a collective entity; B. culture is the totality of activities and objects through which meaning is generated and circulated in a given collective entity.

The term "culture" traces its roots back to German Romanticism and Herder's idea of the Volksgeist (the "spirit" of a people), which was adapted for anthropological use by Adolf Bastian. From Bastian the term diffused (via Edward B. Tyler) into British anthropology (where it never received great prominence), and (via Franz Boas) into American anthropology (where it came to define the very subject-matter of anthropology). Nevertheless, in one of the many paradoxical turns of the history of anthropology, it is Tylor's definition that is most often cited as classical.

By Tylor, the term "culture" was used to denote the totality (see holism) of the humanly created world, from material culture and cultivated landscapes, via social institutions (political, religious, economic etc.), to knowledge andmeaning. Tylor's definition is still widely cited:

"Culture, or civilization, taken in its broad, ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."

Often this is still what is meant by the term, though there have been a number of attempts at narrowing down the definition and giving it a less totalizing meaning. Two extremes may here be noted:

- ✓ Within ecological anthropology there is a tendency to describe culture as a "tool" used by society to maintain its adaptation to nature. This "tool" comprises concrete, physical tools, but also knowledge, skills and forms of organization. A classical definition of this kind was offered by Rapp port (1968 [1980]: 233). According to this definition, culture is"... a part of the distinctive means by which a local population maintains itself in an ecosystem and by which a regional population maintains and coordinates its groups and distributes them over the available land."
- ✓ A number of anthropologists have argued for a purely cognitive definition of culture. The idea is here that "culture" may be limited to the communicative and meaningful aspects of social life: from language to the meaning carried by symbols, persons, actions and events. This definition has its roots in the American Culture and Personality School (see Ruth Benedict). It was formalized in 1952 by Kroeber and Kluckhohn in their famous compilation of 162 definitions of culture that were current in the anthropological literature at the time. In an attempt to bring order into this definitional jungle, the authors suggested that the subject matter of anthropology be culture, defined as the symbolic, linguistic and meaningful aspects of human collectivities. Sociology, in

> contrast, was to concern itself with "society", i.e. social organization, social interaction etc. In formulating this "division of labor" between anthropology and sociology, the influence of the sociologist Talcott Parsons (who cooperated extensively with Kroeber and Kluckhohn) is clearly visible.

Even in the USA, however, the "division of labor" was never strictly upheld: Clifford Geertz, Kluckhohns influential student, though he adhered to the conceptual division of culture and society, was not (even in his early works) willing to surrender "society" to the sociologists. For British social anthropologists, whose canonical father was Durkheim and who understood anthropology as "comparative sociology", the American "division of labor" was not acceptable at all.

Geertz himself provided a classical "cognitive" definition of culture, as:"... an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life" (Geertz 1973: 89).

In spite of heated debates and heavy critique, the contrast between (cognitive) "culture" and (sociological) "society" has wide currency in anthropology even today, with the latter comprising the interactive and material aspects of social life: everything people do - with themselves, with objects and with each other.

In the 1980's, the concept of culture was stridently attacked by the postmodernists, who argued that it misleads us to think of societies as static units, with an internal cohesion that is simply taken for granted; the reifiedexotification of the lifeways of an entire "people" was also heavily criticized by indigenous groups; while other actors saw culture as a politically dangerous term that might legitimize nationalism, ethnic stigmatization and racism. Even in the 2000's, the culture concept has not recovered from this barrage of critique, and many anthropologists have argued that the term (which has gained increasing popularity outside anthropology) should no longer be used by anthropologists. It is worth noting, however, that it is the cognitive definition of culture that is most vulnerable to critique, and that the old, Tylorean definition may still survive into post-postmodernism. Moreover, the critique of culture is to a large extent part of an internal debate in American "cultural anthropology", and has had much less impact in the European anthropological traditions, with their sociological bias.

Chapter-4

Norms and Values

Social Values and Norms

Values and norms are evaluative beliefs that synthesize affective and cognitive elements to orient people to the world in which they live. Their evaluative element makes them unlike existential beliefs, which focus primarily on matters of truth or falsehood, correctness or incorrectness. Their cognitive element makes them unlike motives that can derive from emotions or psychological drives. Values and norms involve cognitive beliefs of approval or disapproval. Although they tend to persist through time and therefore faster continuity in society and human personality, they also are susceptible to change (Moss and Susman 1980; Alwin 1994).

The evaluative criteria represented in values and norms influence the behavior of subject units at multiple levels (e.g., individuals, organizations, and societies) as well as judgments about the behavior of others, which also can influence behavior. For example, values and norms affect the evaluation of individuals as suitable marriage partners and in that way influence marital behavior. Values and norms also affect evaluation of the governing policies and practices of societies and thus have an impact on diplomatic relations and the policies of one society's government toward other societies.

Concept of Value

A value is a belief about the desirability of a mode, means, or end of action (Kluckhohn 1951; Schwartz and Bilsky 1987). It indicates the degree to which something is regarded as good versus bad. A value tends to be general rather than specific, transcending particular types of action and situations. As a general evaluative criterion, it is used to assess specific behaviors in specific situations.

The evaluative criteria represented by values derive from conceptions of morality, aesthetics, and achievement. That is, a mode, means, or end of action can be regarded as good or bad for moral, aesthetic, or cognitive reasons and often for a combination of those reasons (Kluckhohn 1951; Parsons and Shils 1951). For example, being considerate of others may be valued positively (i.e., be viewed as desirable or good) for moral reasons, neatness may be valued positively for aesthetic reasons, and intelligence may be valued positively for cognitive reasons. Since the distinguishing characteristic of a value is evaluation as good or bad, a value that has a cognitive basis is a function of cognitive appraisal based on competency and achievement rather than on scientific or utilitarian grounds. For example, the choice of steel rather than iron to construct a building is a decision based on scientific or utilitarian criteria rather than on values.

The concept of a value must be differentiated from other concepts that appear to be similar. One of those concepts is a preference. A value may be thought of as a type of preference, but not all preferences are values. The distinctive characteristic of a value is that it is based on a belief about what is desirable rather than on mere liking. A preference for an equitable rather than inequitable distribution of rewards is a value, but a preference for vanilla rather than chocolate ice cream is not.

The concept of a value also bears some similarity to the concept of an attitude. Some analysts have suggested that a value is a type of attitude (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975; Glenn 1980), but there are differences between the two concepts. An attitude refers to an organization of several beliefs around a specific object or situation, whereas a value refers to a single belief of a specific kind: a belief about desirability that is based in conceptions of morality, aesthetics, or achievement and transcends specific behaviors and situations. Because of its generality, a value occupies a more central and hierarchically important place in human personality and cognitive structure than does an attitude. It is a determinant of attitudes as well as behavior. Thus, evaluations of numerous attitude objects and situations are based on a relatively small number of values. Not all attitudes, however, derive from values. For example, an attitude toward skiing may be based on the extent to which that sport is found to be enjoyable rather than on a value. The concept of a value also differs from the concept of an interest in much the same way that it differs from the concept of an attitude, since an interest is a type of attitude that results in the directing of one’s attention and action toward a focal object or situation. As is true of attitudes more broadly, some interests derive from valuesbut others do not.

The concept of a value also can be distinguished from the related concept of a motive. The basic property of a motive is the ability to induce valences (incentives) that may be positive or negative. A value has a motive property, involving a predisposition to act in a certain way, because it affects the evaluation of the expected consequences of an action and therefore the choice among possible alternatives; however, it is a less person-centered concept than a motive, which also encompasses emotions and drives. A value is a particular type of motive involving a belief about the desirability of an action that derives from an evaluation of that action’s expected consequences in a situation. A value is a distinctively human motive, unlike motives that operate at both the human and the infrahuman levels.

A value also differs from a need. Although both function as motives because of their ability to induce valences, a need is distinctive in being a requirement for the continued performance of an activity and the attainment of other valued outcomes (Emerson 1987). Some needs have a biological basis; others are psychological, often deriving from the persistent frustration of important goals. Although a value may arise from a need, becoming a cognitive transformation of that need, not all needs are transformed into values and not all values derive from needs. Needs also may derive from the structure of a situation, having a social or economic basis rather than a person centered biological or psychological basis. For example, a need for income may cause an actor to behave in ways that conflict with his or her values. A need differs from a value in that the continued functioning of the actor and the acquisitions of other valued outcomes are contingent on its being met. A need also differs from a value in that it implies a deficit that imposes a requirement, whereas a value implies motivation that is based on a belief about desirability.

Finally, a value can be differentiated from a goal. A value sometimes is thought of as a goal because goals are selected on the basis of values. However, some values focus on modes of action that are personal attributes, such as intelligence, rather than ends of action, or goals. Values are not goals of behavior. They are evaluative criteria that are used to select goals and appraise the implications of action.

Concept of Norm

Like a value, a norm is an evaluative belief. Whereas a value is a belief about the desirability of behavior, a norm is a belief about the acceptability of behavior (Gibbs 1965; Marini 1984). A norm indicates the degree to which a behavior is regarded as right versus wrong, allowable versus unallowable. It is an evaluative criterion that specifies a rule of behavior, indicating what a behavior ought to be or ought not to be. A prescriptive norm indicates what should be done, and a proscriptive norm indicates what should not be done. Because a norm is a behavioral rule, it produces a feeling of obligation. A value, in contrast, produces a feeling of desirability, of attraction or repulsion.

A norm also differs from a value in its degree of specificity. A norm is less general than a value because it indicates what should or should not be done in particular behavioral contexts. Whereas a value is a general evaluative criterion that transcends particular types of action and situations, a norm is linked directly to particular types of action and situations. For example, there may be a norm proscribing the killing of other human beings that is generally applicable except in situations such as war, self-defense, capital punishment, and euthanasia. Situational variability of this type sometimes is referred to as the conditionality of a norm. A norm, like a value, is generally applicable to the types of action and situations on which it focuses, but it is less general than a value because it is less likely to transcend particular types of action and situations.

Because norms often derive from values, they have their basis in conceptions of morality, aesthetics, and achievement and often in a combination of those conceptions. The basis of a norm tends to affect its strength, or the importance attached to it. For example, a norm based in morality that differentiates right from wrong is likely to be considered more important than a norm based in aesthetics that differentiates the appropriate from the inappropriate, for example, in matters of dress or etiquette. A norm, however, differs from a custom in much the same way that a value differs from a preference. A norm involves an evaluation of what an actor should do, whereas a custom involves an expectation of what an actor will do. It may be expected, for example, that people will drink coffee, but it is usually a matter of indifference whether they do. Drinking coffee is therefore a custom, not a norm; it is not based on a belief about what people ought to do.

The Structure of Values and Norms

Multiple values and norms are organized and linked in the cultures of human social systems and also are linked when they are internalized by individuals. Cultural ‘‘value orientations’’ organize and link values and norms to existential beliefs in general views that also might be called worldviews or ideologies (Kluckhohn 1951). They are sets of linked propositions embracing evaluative and existential elements that describe preferred or obligatory states. Values and norms are linked to and buttressed by existential beliefs about human nature, the human condition, interpersonal relations, the functioning of social organizations and societies, and the nature of the world. Since existential beliefs focus on what is true versus untrue, they are to some degree empirically based and verifiable.

In most of the early conceptual and theoretical work on values, values and norms were not differentiated clearly. Later, particularly as attempts to measure values and norms were made, the two concepts were routinely considered distinct, and studies focusing on them have been carried out separately since that time. As a result, the relationship between values and norms rarely has been analyzed theoretically or empirically.

Values and norms are closely related because values usually provide the justification for norms. As beliefs about what is desirable and undesirable, values often are associated with normative beliefs that require or preclude certain behavior, establishing boundaries to indicate what is acceptable versus unacceptable. For example, the positive value attached to human safety and security is supported by norms that proscribe doing harm to other persons and their property. Not all values are supported by norms, however. Displaying personal competence in a variety of ways is positively valued, but norms do not always require it. Similarly, not all norms support values. For example, norms in regard to dress and etiquette can be quite arbitrary. Their existence may support values, but the specific rules of behavior they establish may not.

Many cultural value orientations organize and link the values and norms that operate as evaluative criteria in human social systems. These orientations are learned and internalized by individuals in unique ways that vary with an individual’s personal characteristics and social history and the interaction between the two. Cultural value orientations and internalized individual value orientations are more comprehensive systems of values and norms than those activated as influences on particular types of behavior. The latent structure of values and norms that characterizes a social system or an individual can be thought of as a map or blueprint (Rokeach 1973). Only a portion of the map or blueprint that is immediately relevant to the behavioral choices being made is consulted, and the rest is ignored temporarily. Different subsets of values and norms that make up different portions of the map or blueprint are activated when different types of behavioral choices are made. For example, the values and norms relevant in choosing a mate differ from those relevant in deciding how to allocate one’s time among various activities.

The Object Unit

A characteristic of values and norms that is important for understanding their structure is the type of object unit to which they pertain, such as an individual, an organization, or a society. Values and norms establish what is desirable or acceptable for particular types of object units. For example, physical and psychological health are positively valued ends of action for individuals, and norms that proscribe or prescribe action to maintain or promote health govern individual action. Democracy, distributive justice, and world peace are positively valued ends of action for societies, and norms, usually in the form of laws, proscribe and prescribe certain actions on the part of a society’s institutions in support of those values. Individuals may value democracy, justice, and peace, but these are societal values, not individual values, since they pertain to the characteristics of societies, not to those of individuals.

Differentiating values by their object units is important in conceptualizing and measuring values relevant to the explanation of behavior because correspondence between the actor, or subject unit, and the object unit determines the extent to which behavior by the actor is relevant to achieving a particular end. Individuals differentiate between personal and societal values because they do not have direct influence over social values, thus distinguishing their beliefs on the basis of whether they think those beliefs will lead to action (Braithwaite and Law 1985).

The Basis of Evaluation

As evaluative criteria, values and norms have the ability to induce valences (incentives). They affect evaluation of the behavior of others and involve a predisposition to act in a certain way because they affect the evaluation of the expected consequences of action. The evaluation that occurs on the basis of values and norms derives from two structural properties: the polarity, or directionality, of the value or norm and the standard of comparison that is used.

- ✓ **Polarity→** The polarity of a value or norm is the direction of its valence, or motive force, which may be positive or negative. In the case of a value, something that is evaluated as desirable will have a positive valence, whereas something that is evaluated as undesirable will have a negative valence. In the case of a norm, something that should be done will have a positive valence, whereas something that should not be done will have a negative valence.
- ✓ **Standard of Comparison→** A value or norm also is characterized by a standard, or level, of aspiration or expectation. This evaluative standard is a reference point with respect to which a behavior and its consequences are evaluated. A subject unit’s own action and that of others, as well as the ends that result or may result from action, are evaluated on the basis of whether they are above or below an evaluative standard.

In the case of a value, the evaluative standard determines the neutral point on the value scale at or above which a behavior or its consequences will be evaluated as desirable and below which a behavior or its consequences will be evaluated as undesirable. In both economics and psychology, it has been recognized that there is a utility, or value, function that should be considered nonlinear (Marini [1992] provides a discussion of these developments), and there is empirical evidence that it generally is appropriate to assume the existence of a reference point on a utility, or value, scale. This reference point plays a critical role in producing a nonlinear relationship between the value scale and the objective continuum of behavior and its consequences. It has been observed that value functions change significantly at a certain point, which is often, although not always, zero. In the prospect theory of Kahneman and Tversky (1979), outcomes are expressed as positive or negative deviations from a neutral reference outcome that is assigned a value of zero. Kahneman and Tversky propose an S-shaped value function that is concave above the reference point and convex below it but less steep above than below. This function specifies that the effect of a marginal change decreases with the distance from the reference point in either direction but that the response to outcomes below the reference point is more extreme than is the response to outcomes above it. The asymmetry of the value function suggests a stronger aversion to what is evaluated as undesirable, an asymmetry that is consistent with an empirically observed aversion to loss.

In the case of a norm, the evaluative standard is set by what is defined to be acceptable versus unacceptable. It is a level of expectation that is determined by the specific behaviors that are regarded as right versus wrong, appropriate versus inappropriate. An important difference between a value and a norm is that whereas there is a continuous, nonlinear relationship between a value scale and the objective continuum of behavior or its consequences above the neutral point set by the evaluative standard, this relationship is not expected between the scale of evaluation based on a normative criterion and the objective continuum of behavior. Because a normative standard establishes a boundary of acceptability or requirement that applies to all those covered by the norm, compliance with a normative expectation is not evaluated as a continuous variable on the basis of variation in behavior above the reference point set by the normative expectation. However, violation of a normative standard is evaluated as a continuous variable on the basis of variation in behavior below the reference point set by the standard. Negative deviations from the standard are likely to be evaluated in much the same way as are negative evaluations from the reference point on a value scale, which is convex below the reference point. Because of the strong aversion to what is evaluated as being below the reference standard, behavior that violates a normative standard is likely to be eliminated from consideration as an option.

The level of aspiration or expectation that operates as an evaluative standard for an actor is socially determined to a large degree. It is a ‘‘comparison level’’ learned from others whom the actor takes as referents. As a result of variation in the characteristics of actors, the social environments to which they are exposed, and the interaction between those two factors, the evaluative standards associated with values and norms vary across actors. Even among actors in the same social environment, the evaluative standard is specific to the actor, although there may be a high degree of consensus about it in a social group.

The evaluative standards associated with values and norms are subject to change in an individual actor. An important source of change is experience that affects the level of ability, knowledge, or accomplishment of an actor. For example, the evaluative standard for achievement values is affected by an actor’s level of achievement. There is evidence that people tend to raise their value standards with success and lower them with failure. Thus, as a worker learns a job, that worker's ability to perform the job increases, as does the worker's evaluative standard. A level of ability that once was aspired to and evaluated as ‘‘extremely good’’ may, after increases in the worker's ability, come to be viewed as ‘‘mediocre’’ and below the worker's current evaluative standard for expected performance. Experience also may affect the evaluative standard for norms. For example, there is evidence that the experience of divorce changes normative beliefs about divorce in the direction of increasing its acceptability (Thornton 1985). Another source of change in the evaluative standards associated with the values and norms of an actor is an increase in knowledge of the world that alters the existential beliefs connected with values and norms.

The evaluative standards associated with values and norms vary not only among actors and over time for the same actor but also with the characteristics of other actors whose behavior is the object of evaluation. These characteristics may differentiate among actors or among the circumstances of the same actor at different times. For example, the value standard used by an adult to evaluate a child's knowledge will vary for children who have completed different amounts of schooling, such as an elementary school student, a high school student, or a college student: The amount of knowledge evaluated as ‘‘very good’’ for an elementary school student will differ from that evaluated as ‘‘very good’’ for a student at a more advanced stage of schooling. Different value standards will be applied to different students and to the same student at different stages of schooling. Similarly, in a work organization, the value standard used to evaluate performance may vary for different categories of workers: Those with more experience may be evaluated according to a higher standard. Again, these different tandards may be applied to different workers who are in different categories or to the same worker as he or she progresses from one category to another.

Like a value standard, a normative standard may vary with the characteristics of other actors whose behavior is an object of evaluation. However, there is a difference between a value and a norm in this regard. Because a value is a continuous variable, variation in the value standard with the characteristics of the other actors whose behavior is being evaluated need not have implications for whether the value applies to those actors. In contrast, because a norm is a discrete variable that differentiates what is acceptable from what is unacceptable, variation in the evaluative standard of a norm with the characteristics of other actors whose behavior is being evaluated determines whether the norm applies to other actors with particular characteristics. This variabilitythat is, variability in whether a value or norm applies based on the characteristics of the actors being evaluated is a dimension of the importance of a value or norm and is labeled its conditionality.

Dimensions of Importance

It is commonly recognized that values and norms differ in their priority, or importance, and that those differences are another aspect of the structure of values and norms. Differences in priority produce a structure that is to some degree hierarchical. Recognition that not all values are of equal importance has led to the use of ranking procedures to measure values (Allport et al. 1960; Rokeach 1973). These procedures have been criticized for forcing respondents to represent their values in a ranked order that does not allow for the possibility that some values may be of equal importance (Alwin and Krosnick 1985; Braithwaite and Law 1985). Although there is a hierarchy among values, there may be sets of values that occupy the same position in the hierarchy. The priority of a value or norm not only has implications for its influence on behavior but also may have implications for the probability that it will change, since values and norms of high priority have been argued to be less likely to change than are those of low priority.

The priority, or importance, of a value or norm can be assessed on a number of dimensions:

1. strength, or intensity,
2. centrality,
3. range,
4. conditionally, and
5. intent

Although these dimensions are conceptually different, they are likely to overlap empirically to a considerable degree. The extent to which and ways in which they overlap in reflecting the importance of a value or norm are not known.

- ✓ **Strength→** The strength of a value or norm can be defined as the maximum strength of the force field it can induce. The strength of the valence reflects its hierarchical position in the latent map or blueprint that characterizes the structure of values and norms for a social system or an individual. Although the strength of a value or norm is likely to display considerable stability, it is also subject to change. At the level of the social system, it may change as a result of long-term changes in social organization and aspects of culture as well as precipitating events. As the social system changes, socializing influences on individuals change. Changes in the values and norms of individuals occur both over the life course (Glenn 1980; Alwin 1994) and as a result of differences between those who are born and move through life in different historical periods. The motivational force of a value at a particular time, however, is not necessarily the maximum strength of its latent force field, because attaining a valued outcome may reduce the subjective utility of additional units of that outcome as a result of diminishing marginal utility, or satiation. In the case of either a value or a norm, whether one attains an outcome also may alter the maximum strength of its latent force field. For example, if attainment is problematic, the importance of a value or norm may decline as a way of reducing cognitive dissonance.

- ✓ **Centrality→** The centrality of a value or norm can be defined as the number and variety of behaviors or ends to which it applies. Because a central value or norm contributes more than does a peripheral one to the coherent organization and functioning of the total system, the disappearance of a central value or norm would make a greater difference to the total system than would the disappearance of a peripheral value or norm. A central value or norm is more resistant to change than is a peripheral value or norm; however, if change occurs, the more central the value or norm changed, the more widespread its repercussions (Rokeach 1973, 1985).

For individuals and even for social groups, concern and responsibility for the well-being of others is a central value that pertains to a large number and variety of specific behaviors and ends. It is supported by a central proscriptive norm that one should not harm others and a central prescriptive norm that one should help others, particularly if they are in need. These norms pertain to a large number and variety of specific behaviors. In contrast, excitement and adventure are more peripheral values, affecting a smaller number and variety of specific behaviors and ends. In connection with these values, peripheral norms govern the carrying out of specific types of activities that may be sources of excitement and adventure, such as the rules governing sports and potentially dangerous recreational activities.

For individuals, life values that pertain to the overall ends, or goals, of life along with the norms that support them tend to be more central than are the values and norms that pertain to particular life domains or social roles. Part of the reason for this is that life values affect whether particular life domains or social roles are entered into and the amounts of time and energy a person spends in different domains and roles.

They also affect an individual’s domain- and role-specific values and norms. For example, life values include things such as attaining a high material standard of living, having meaningful family relationships and friendships, making the world a better place, and having a good time. Life values of this type are among the factors that influence entry into various life domains and roles, the activities in those domains and roles, and how much investment is made in each one (e.g., marriage, parenthood, employment, friendships, leisure activities and hobbies, community activities, religion). Values and norms pertaining to each of the domains and roles are to some degree a function of overall life values. For example, if an individual places a higher priority on making the world a better place than on material well-being, that individual’s employment values will place a higher priority on the possible influence and significance of the work performed than on the earnings derived from the work. Similarly, if an individual places a higher priority on meaningful relationships than on material wellbeing, marital values will place a higher priority on love and mutual respect than on the shared material standard of living.

- ✓ **Range→** The range of a value or norm can be defined as the number and variety of actors of a particular type of object unit (e.g., individuals, organizations, and societies) to which it applies. Whereas the dimension of centrality focuses on the characteristics of action and its ends (i.e., the number and variety of behaviors or ends to which a value or norm applies), the dimension of range focuses on the characteristics of actors (i.e., the number and variety of individuals or larger social units to which a value or norm applies). The characteristics of actors used to define the range of a value or norm tend to be as creative or group defining characteristics of individuals or larger social units. In the case of individuals, these are characteristics such as age, sex, nationality, race, and ethnicity. A value or norm with a broad range applies to all actors of a particular type of object unit, whereas a value or norm with a narrow range applies to a very restricted category of actors of that type. For example, concern about and responsibility for the wellbeing of others is a value with a broad range that applies universally to individuals throughout the world. In contrast, wisdom is a value with a narrower range because although it applies throughout the world, it applies primarily to people of older ages. Similarly, the norm against incest has a broad range because it applies universally to individuals throughout the world. In contrast, the norm prescribing paid employment has a narrower range because it applies primarily to men in particular age categories.

- ✓ **Conditionality→** The conditionality of a value or norm can be defined as the number and variety of situations to which it applies. Whereas the dimension of centrality focuses on the characteristics of action or its ends and the dimension of range focuses on the characteristics of actors, the dimension of conditionality focuses on the characteristics of situations, including a situation's actors. When conditionality pertains to the characteristics of a situation's actors, it usually refers to emergent or potentially changing characteristics of actors that define the situation rather than to ascriptive characteristics that define membership in social groups. Although values are less tied to specific types of situations than norms are, both values and norms vary in the degree to which they are conditioned on the characteristics of situations. For example, some values pertaining to modes of conduct, such as courtesy, cleanliness, and honesty, are applicable across most situations. Others are applicable in many fewer situations or may even be bipolar, with the polarity of the value being conditional on the situation. For example, aggressiveness is positively valued in some types of competitive situations, such as warfare and sports, but negatively valued in some types of cooperative situations, such as conversation and child rearing.

The conditionality of a value or norm is evident when a given subject actor who is evaluating a given type of action or end of action makes different evaluations in different types of situations, that is, when the evaluation varies with the characteristics of the situation. For example, friendliness is valued positively, but it is a value characterized by some conditionality, since it is valued negatively when exhibited toward strangers in dangerous environments. Killing other human beings is normatively proscribed in almost all situations, but the norm has some conditionality because killing is not proscribed in warfare, self-defense, capital punishment, and euthanasia. In capital punishment and some types of warfare, killing actually is prescribed. Abortion is believed by some people to be normatively proscribed, and whether it is normatively proscribed often depends on the characteristics of the situation, including how conception occurred, whether the mother’s health is in danger, and whether the mother can care for the child. Opposition to abortion is therefore a norm of higher conditionality than is the proscription against killing other human beings. The conditionality of a value or norm is defined by the number and variety of situations to which it applies consistently, that is, with the same polarity. A value or norm that has the same polarity across many and varied types of situations is a value or norm of low conditionality and therefore of high priority. A value or norm that has the same polarity in only a few similar types of situations is a value or norm of high conditionality and low priority.

- ✓ **Intent→** Whether a value applies to a mode, means, or end of action has been labeled its intent (Kluckhohn 1951). Mode values pertain to the manner or style in which an action is carried out and refer to both the action and the actor. They pertain to qualities manifested in the act, and if such qualities are observed consistently over time for a type of action or for an actor, they are applied not just to a single instance of action but to a type of action or to an actor more generally. Adjectives such as ‘‘intelligent,’’ ‘‘independent,’’ ‘‘creative,’’ ‘‘responsible,’’ ‘‘kind,’’ and ‘‘generous’’ describe mode values. Instrumental values focus on necessary means to other ends. They refer to action that constitutes the means or from which the means are derived. For example, a job and the earnings it provides may be viewed as means to other ends such as acquiring the material resources necessary to sustain life. Goal values, in contrast, pertain to self-sufficient, or autonomous, ends of action. They are not subordinate to other values and are what an actor values most. Some analysts have argued that they can be defined as what an actor desires without limit. They focus on sources of intrinsic satisfaction or happiness but are distinguished from pleasures, which, except when elevated to become goal values, are satisfactions that are enjoyed incidentally and along the way. Pleasures are not necessarily based on beliefs about desirability, since they can be based on mere liking.

A norm may apply to a mode or means of action but not to an end of action. By requiring or prohibiting a way of acting or a type of action, norms limit the modes and means used in accomplishing ends. For example, the values of honesty and fairness govern modes and means of accomplishing ends, and associated with these values are norms that require honest and fair action.

Values and norms cannot always be identified as falling into a single category of intent. For some types of action, mode values and norms and instrumental or goal values and norms overlap; choosing an action as a means or to directly achieve an end actually defines the mode of action. For example, accomplishing a task by a means that shows concern for others defines a mode of acting that is kind, considerate, polite, and caring. Choosing to accomplish a task by honest means defines a mode of acting honestly. Acting to achieve an end that benefits others defines a mode of acting that is caring, giving, and generous. Mode values and norms and instrumental or goal values and norms do not always overlap, however. A given mode may be applied to a variety of means and ends, and choosing a means or acting to achieve an end does not necessarily imply or define a mode. For example, for modes that reflect ability or competence, as described by adjectives such as ‘‘intelligent’’, ‘‘creative,’’ ‘‘efficient,’’ ‘‘courageous,’’ ‘‘organized,’’ and ‘‘self-reliant,’’ there may be no necessary connection or only a limited one between the values reflected in the mode and the values reflected in the acts undertaken as means or ends.

Differentiating between instrumental values and goal values is difficult because the two types are interdependent. Their relationship is not just one of sequence, since achieving particular ends may require the use of certain means (Kluckhohn 1951; Fallding 1965). Differentiating between instrumental values and goal values also requires reflection by the actor. An important concern of moral philosophy has been identifying the end or ends of action that ultimately bring satisfaction to human beings, that is, that have genuine, intrinsic value (Lovejoy 1950). The focus has been on identifying important goal values and distinguishing them from less important instrumental values. This means–end distinction is not as well developed in the category systems of all cultures as it is in Western culture (Kluckhohn 1951), and even among persons exposed to Western culture, it is not developed equally or similarly in all actors. Not all actors make the distinction or make it in the same way. What are instrumental values to some actors are goal values to others.

When mode, instrumental, & goal values are separable, they can all affect behavior. Sometimes they point to identical actions, and sometimes they do not. Similarly, when mode and instrumental norms are separable, both can affect behavior. Among values that can pertain to either means or ends, the distinction between instrumental and goal values is a dimension of importance, with goal values being of higher priority than instrumental values (Fallding 1965; Braithwaite & Law 1985).

However, values that can pertain only to a mode or means are not necessarily of lower priority than are values that can pertain to ends.

Interrelationships

Because social structure, as defined both organizationally and culturally, links sets of values and norms, there are patterned relationships among the sets of values and norms held by actors. These relationships can be seen as being influenced by conceptual domain, dimensions of importance, behavioral context, and interdependence.

Conceptual Domain→ Values and norms that are conceptually similar are thought of as falling within the same conceptual domain, and a conceptual domain is identified by the observation of strong empirical relationships among sets of values or norms. Domains that are conceptually distinct also can have relationships to one another. Compatible domains are positively related, and contradictory domains are negatively related. Empirical research provides some evidence of the existence of conceptual domains of values and norms and the relationships among them. For example, in Western societies, a value domain emphasizing pleasure, comfort, and enjoyment has a negative relationship to a prosocial value domain that emphasizes concern and responsibility for others. Similarly, a value domain emphasizing the extrinsic attainment of power, money, and position has a negative relationship to the prosocial value domain (Schwartz and Bilsky 1987).

Values appear to be organized along at least three broad dimensions:

- ✓ emphasis on the self versus others,
- ✓ emphasis on achievement versus pleasure, and
- ✓ emphasis on the external versus the internal.

Although there has been less research on the pattern of interrelationships among norms, evidence indicates that norms fall into conceptual domains. Norms pertaining to honesty, for example, are conceptually separable from norms pertaining to personal freedom in family matters, sexuality, and mortality.

- ✓ **Dimensions of Importance→** Interrelationships among values and norms also are affected by dimensions of importance, since these dimensions affect their application across object units, social institutions, social roles, and behavioral contexts. Dimensions of importance such as centrality, range, and conditionality are linked to variability in application across object units, social institutions, and social roles. Values and norms that have high importance because they are broadly applicable are more likely to be interrelated than are values and norms that have low importance, which apply more narrowly. Values and norms that apply narrowly are related to each other and to values and norms that apply more broadly only under the conditions in which they apply.
- ✓ **Behavioral Context→** Interrelationships among values and norms are influenced not only by conceptual domains and dimensions of importance but also by the behavioral contexts to which they apply. Values and norms that are relevant to the same or related behavioral contexts tend to be interrelated. For example, the values and norms that play a role in interpersonal relationships differ in some respects from those which play a role in educational and occupational performance. The value of concern for others and the norms that support it are of high priority in interpersonal relationships but can be of low priority in the performance of educational and occupational tasks.
- ✓ **Interdependence→** Socially structured or otherwise necessary links among modes, means, and ends of action are a source of interdependence among values and norms. Mode values and norms and instrumental or goal values and norms can overlap, and instrumental and goal values are interdependent when achieving particular ends requires the use of certain means. This interdependence constrains the extent to which the relative priority of values can affect action. For example, attaining a less highly valued means cannot be forgone to

attain a more highly valued end if the end cannot be attained without the means.

The Origin of Values and Norms

Multiple values and norms are organized and linked in the cultures of human social systems, which are linked when they are internalized by human actors or institutionalized by corporate actors. Social values and norms, in contrast to personal, or internalized, values and norms refer to the values and norms of a social unit that encompasses more than one person. These may refer to the officially stated or otherwise institutionalized values and norms of an organization or society, or to the collective, or shared, values and norms of the individuals who constitute a social unit such as an informal reference group, a formal organization, a society, or a societal subgroup defined by a shared characteristic. When a social value or norm refers to a collective property of the members of a social unit, it may be held with varying degrees of consensus by those who constitute that unit (Rossi and Berk 1985). An important difference between formal organizations and informal social groups or geographically defined social units is that formal organizations usually come into being for a specific purpose and are dedicated to particular types of activity and to achieving particular ends. As a result, their objectives are both narrower and more varied than those of other social units.

The Social Origin of Personal Values and Norms

The values and norms of individual persons derive from the social environments to which they are exposed. Through socialization, individuals become aware of and internalize social values and norms, which then become important internal determinants of action. An individual's internalized values and norms reflect the values and norms of the society and the various subgroups and organizations within that society to which that individual is exposed, particularly, although not exclusively, in the early stages of the life course. Once social values and norms are internalized, they can direct the behavior of individuals irrespective of external influences. Internalized values and norms are a source of selfexpectations and a basis of selfevaluation, with the subjective response to an outcome ensuing from the self concept. Adherence to selfexpectations enhances self-esteem, producing a sense of pride and other favorable self-evaluations. Violation of self-expectations reduces selfesteem, producing guilt, self-depreciation, and other negative selfevaluations. To preserve a sense of self-worth and avoid negative selfevaluations, individuals try to behave in accordance with their internalized values and norms. Sociologists tend to see internalized values and norms as an important influence on human behavior, and this makes them see the social values and norms of society as governing and constraining the choices individuals make. Social values and norms also affect behavior because they are internalized by significant others and thus affect an actor's perception of other people's expectations. To the extent that actors are motivated to comply with what they perceive the views of others to be, social values and norms become a source of external pressure that exerts an influence that is independent of an individual's internalized values and norms.

Although change in personal values and norms occurs over the life course, there is some evidence that levels of stability are relatively high (Moss and Susman 1980; Sears 1983; Alwin 1994). It has been argued that values and norms that are more closely tied to the self-concept and considered more important are more resistant to change (Rokeach 1973; Glenn 1980). Those values and norms may undergo less change because they are internalized through conditioning-like processes that begin early in life and are strongly linked to existential beliefs. They tend to be tied to shared mental models that are used to construct reality and become embedded central elements of cognitive organization with a strong affective basis. Some types of values, norms, and attitudes (for example, political attitudes) are quite malleable into early adulthood and then become relatively stable. After this ‘‘impressionable,’’ or ‘‘formative,’’ period when change is greatest, they are relatively stable in midlife, and this stability either persists or declines in the later years (Alwin et al. 1991; Alwin 1994). The pattern of life-course change and stability described above has been argued to be due to a number of influences. One is the process of biological and psychological maturation with age, which is most rapid in the early stages of life. As functional capacity develops, influences at that time have the advantage of primacy, and when they are consistent over a period of years, affective ‘‘mass’’ is built up. Nevertheless, some types of values, norms, and attitudes remain malleable into early adulthood, and strong pressure to change or weak earlier socialization can lead to resocialization in late adolescence or early adulthood (Sears 1981; Alwin et al. 1991). It is likely that change declines after early adulthood in part because individuals tend to act on previously formed values, norms, and attitudes as they seek new information and experiences. This selective structuring of new inputs enhances consistency over time, since new inputs tend to reinforce rather than call into question earlier ones.

Another influence on life-course change and stability in values and norms is change in social experiences and roles over the life course (Wells and Stryker 1988; Elder and Caspi 1990). These changes are extensive during the transitional years of early adulthood and may increase after retirement. They represent opportunities for change because they bring the individual into contact with new individuals, reference groups, and situations, and change in values and norms is likely to occur through both interaction with others and adaptation to situations. Role change can produce change as a role occupant engages in new behaviors, is exposed to new circumstances and information, and learns the norms governing role behavior. After early adulthood, a decline in the number of changes in social experiences and roles leads to greater stability in values and norms.

Sources of Change in Social Values and Norms

Change in social values and norms occur through a variety of processes. One influence is historical change in the conditions of life that occurs through technological innovation, alterations in economic and social organization, and change in cultural ideas and forms. Historical change by definition involves ‘‘period effects,’’ but because those effects tend to be experienced differently by different birth cohorts (i.e., those at different ages when a historical change occurs), the influence of historical change on social values and norms occurs to some degree through a process of cohort succession.

Change in social values and norms also occur through change in the social values and norms of subgroups of social units. This change can be of several types. First, change in the presence and size of subgroups with different values and norms produces change in the collective values and norms of the group. For example, the presence of new immigrant groups with different values and norms or a change in the relative size of groups with different values and norms affects the values and norms of the collective unit. Second, change in the degree of similarity or difference in the values and norms of subgroups can produce change in overall values and norms. On the one hand, acculturation through intergroup contact and similar experiences will reduce the distinctiveness of subcultural groups; on the other hand, segregation and increasing divergence in the life experiences of subgroups will widen their cultural distinctiveness. Third, some subcultural groups may be more subject to particular period influences than others are, and this differential responsiveness can increase or decrease differences in values and norms among subgroups.

Another source of change in social values and norms is change in exposure to social organizations that exert distinct socializing influences. For example, exposure to religious, educational, or work organizations may produce differences in values and norms between those with such exposure and those without it. The extent to which exposure to different organizational environments is likely to affect personal values and norms depends on the distinctiveness of those environments, which also is subject to change. Thus, social values and norms are affected by both changes in the exposure of the population to different organizations and changes in what is socialized by those organizations.

The Role of Values and Norms in Explaining Behavior

The ways in which values and norms influence behavior must be understood in a larger explanatory framework, and models of purposive action in all the social sciences provide that framework (Marini 1992). These models rest on the assumption that actors are purposive, acting in ways that tend to produce beneficial results. Although the models of purposive action that have emerged in various social sciences differ in the nature of the assumptions made about purposive action, they share the basic proposition that people are motivated to achieve pleasure and avoid pain and that this motivation leads them to act in ways that, at least within the limits of the information they possess and their ability to predict the future, can be expected to yield greater reward than cost. If reward and cost are defined subjectively and individuals are assumed to act in the service of subjective goals, this proposition links subjective utility, or value, to action. In sociology, a model of purposive action assumes the existence of actors who may be either persons or corporate actors. The usefulness of these models in sociology hinges on making appropriate connections between the characteristics of social systems and the behavior of actors (the macro–micro connection) and between the behavior of actors and the systemic outcomes that emerge from the combined actions of multiple actors (the micro–macro connection).

In a model of purposive action, an individual actor (person or corporate actor) is assumed to make choices among alternative actions structured by the social system. Choices among those actions are based on the outcomes expected to ensue from those actions, to which the actor attaches some utility, or value, and which the actor expects with some probability. The choices of the actor are governed by beliefs of three types:

- ✓ The perceived alternatives for action available,
- ✓ The perceived consequences expected to result from each alternative, and
- ✓ The perceived probabilities with which those consequences are expected to result.

The choices of the actor also are governed by the actor's preferences, or the subjective utility (rewards and costs) of the consequences expected to result from each alternative. Values and norms are among the preferences of an actor that influence action. As evaluative beliefs that synthesize affective and cognitive elements, they affect the utility of the outcomes expected to ensue from an action. Action often results not from a conscious weighing of the expected future benefits of alternatives but from a less deliberate response to internalized or institutionalized values and norms (Emerson 1987). The actor's finite resourcesthe human, cultural, social, and material capital available to the actor that enables or precludes actionoperate as influences on the choices made by the actor.

The component of a model of purposive action that makes the macro micro connection links the characteristics of the social system to the behavior of actors and models the effects of social structure (both organizational and cultural) on the beliefs and preferences of actors as well as on the available alternatives for action and actors' resources. In this component of the model, characteristics of the micro model are taken as problematic and to be explained. These characteristics include:

- ✓ The beliefs and preferences on the basis of which an actor makes choices,
- ✓ The alternatives available to an actor, and
- ✓ The resources available to an actor.

A third component of a model of purposive action makes the micro– macro connection, linking the behavior of individual actors to the systemic outcomes that emerge from the combined actions of multiple actors. This link may occur through a simple mechanism such as aggregation, but it is more likely that outcomes emerge through a complex interaction in which the whole is not just the sum of its parts. The action, behavior, of the system is usually an emergent consequence of the interdependent actions of the actors that compose it.

Norm (social)

Shaking hands after sports match is an example of a social norm.

A norm is a groupheld belief about how members should behave in a given context. Sociologists describe norms as informal understandings that govern society's behaviors, while psychologists have adopted a more general definition, recognizing smaller group units, like a team or an office, may also endorse norms separate or in addition to cultural or societal expectations. The psychological definition emphasizes social norms' behavioral component, stating norms have two dimensions: how much behavior is exhibited and how much the group approves of that behavior.

Norms running counter to the behaviors of the overarching society or culture may be transmitted and maintained within small subgroups of society. For example, Crandall (1988) noted that certain groups (e.g., cheerleading squads, dance troupes, sports teams, and sororities) have a rate of bulimia, a publicly recognized lifethreatening disease that is much higher than society as a whole. Social norms have a way of maintaining order and organizing groups.

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Social control

Although not considered to be formal laws within society, norms still work to promote a great deal of social control. Social norms can be enforced formally (e.g., through sanctions) or informally (e.g., through body language and non-verbal communication cues.) Because individuals often derive physical or psychological resources from group membership, groups are said to control discretionary stimuli; groups can withhold or give out more resources in response to members' adherence to group norms, effectively controlling member behavior through rewards and operant conditioning. Social psychology research has found the more an individual values group-controlled resources or the more an individual sees group membership as central to his definition of self, the more likely he is to conform. Social norms also allow you to assess what behaviors the group deems important to its existence or survival, since they represent a codification of belief; groups generally do not punish members or create norms over actions which they care little about. Norms in every culture create conformity that allows for people to become socialized to the culture in which they live.

As social beings, individuals learn when and where it is appropriate to say certain things, to use certain words, to discuss certain topics or wear certain clothes, and when it is not. Thus, knowledge about cultural norms is important for impressions,[6] which is an individual's regulation of their nonverbal behavior. One also comes to know through experience what types of people he/she can and cannot discuss certain topics with or wear certain types of dress around. Typically, this knowledge is derived through experience (i.e. social norms are learned through social interaction).[6] Wearing a suit to a job interview in order to give a great first impression represents a common example of a social norm in the white collar work force.

Sociology

For Talcott Parsons of the functionalist school, norms dictate the interactions of people in all social encounters. On the other hand, Karl Marx believed that norms are used to promote the creation of roles in society which allows for people of different levels of social class structure to be able to function properly. Marx claims that this power dynamic creates social order.

Norm emergence

Groups may adopt norms through a variety of ways. Norms can arise formally, where groups explicitly outline and implement behavioral expectations. Laws or club rules serve as an example of this. A large number of these norms we follow naturally such as driving on the right side of the road in the United States or not speeding in order to avoid a ticket. Many formal norms serve to provide safety to the general public.

However, social norms are much more likely to develop informally, emerging gradually as a result of repeated use of discretionary stimuli to control behavior. Not necessarily laws set in writing, informal norms represent generally accepted and widelysanctioned routines that people follow in everyday life. These informal norms, if broken, may not invite formal legal punishments or sanctions, but instead encourage reprimands, warnings, or bothering; incest, for example, is generally thought of as wrong in society, but many jurisdictions do not legally prohibit it.

Finally, individuals may also import norms from a previous organization to their new group, which can get adopted over time.Without a clear indication of how to act, people typically rely on their past history to determine the best course forward; what was successful before may serve them well again. In a group, individuals may all import different histories or scripts about appropriate behaviors; common experience over time will lead the group to define as a whole its take on the right action, usually with the integration of several members' schemas.Under the importation paradigm, norm formation occurs subtly and swiftlywhereas with formal or informal development of norms may take longer.

Transmission of norms

Groups internalize norms by accepting them as reasonable and proper standards for behavior within the group. Once firmly established, a norm becomes a part of the group's operational structure and hence more difficult to change. While possible for newcomers to a group to change its norms, it is much more likely that the new individual will adopt the group's norms, values, and perspectives, rather than the other way around.

Deviance from social norms

"Normal is a bad word", a graffito in Ljubljana, Slovenia

Deviance is defined as "nonconformity to a set of norms that are accepted by a significant number of people in a community or society." More simply put, if group members do not follow a norm, they become labeled as a deviant. In the sociological literature, this can often lead to them being considered outcasts of society. What is considered “normal” is relative to the location of the culture in which the social interaction is taking place. In psychology, an individual who routinely disobeys group norms runs the risk of turning into the "institutionalized deviant." Similar to the sociological definition, institutionalized deviants may be judged by other group members for their failure to adhere to norms. At first, group members may increase pressure on a non-conformist, attempting to engage the individual in conversation or explicate why she should follow their behavioral expectations. Especially with new members who perhaps do not know any better, groups may use discretionary stimuli to bring an individual's behavior back into line. Over time, however, if a member continues to disobey, the group will give up on her as a lost cause; while the group may not necessarily revoke her membership, they may give her only superficial consideration. If a worker is late to a meeting, for example, violating the office norm of punctuality, a boss or other co-worker may wait for the individual to arrive and pull him aside later to ask what happened. If the behavior continues, eventually the group may begin meetings without him since the individual "is always late." The group generalizes the individual's disobedience and promptly dismisses it, thereby reducing the member's influence and footing in future group disagreements.

Group tolerance for deviation varies across membership; not all group members receive the same treatment for norm violations. Individuals may build up a "reserve" of good behavior through conformity, which they can borrow against later. These idiosyncrasy credits provide a theoretical currency for understanding variations in group behavioral expectations. A teacher, for example, may more easily forgive a straight-A student for misbehaving than a repeatedly disruptive student who has past "good credit" saved up. While past performance can help build idiosyncrasy credits, some group members have a higher balance to start with. Individuals can import idiosyncrasy credits from another group; childhood movie stars, for example, who enroll in college, may experience more leeway in adopting school norms than other incoming freshmen. Finally, leaders or individuals in other high-status positions may begin with more credits and be appear to be "above the rules" at times. Even their idiosyncrasy credits are not bottomless, however; while held to a more lenient standard than the average member, leaders may still face group rejection if their disobedience becomes too extreme.

Focus Theory of Normative Conduct

Cialdini, Reno, and Kallgren developed the Focus Theory of Normative Conduct to describe how individuals implicitly juggle multiple behavioral expectations at once;

expanding on conflicting prior beliefs about whether cultural, situational or personal norms motivate action, the researchers suggested the focus of an individual’s attention will dictate what behavioral expectation they follow. They define a 'Descriptive Norm' as people's perceptions of what is commonly done in specific situations; it signifies what most people do, without assigning judgment. The absence of trash on the ground in a parking lot, for example, transmits the descriptive norm that most people there do not litter. An Injunctive norm, on the other hand, transmits group approval about a particular behavior; it dictates how an individual should behave. Watching another person pick up trash off the ground and throw it out, a group member may pick up on the injunctive norm that he ought to not litter. Descriptive norms depict what happens while injunctive norms describe what should happen.

Other types of norms

Prescriptive and proscriptive

Unwritten rules that are understood and followed by society, prescriptive norms indicate what we should do.[17] Expressing gratitude or writing a Thank You card when someone gives you a gift represents a prescriptive norm in American culture. Proscriptive norms, in contrast, comprise the other end of the same spectrum; they are similarly society's unwritten rules about what one should not do. These norms can vary between cultures; while an acceptable greeting in some European countries, kissing a stranger on the cheek constitutes a proscriptive norm in the United States.

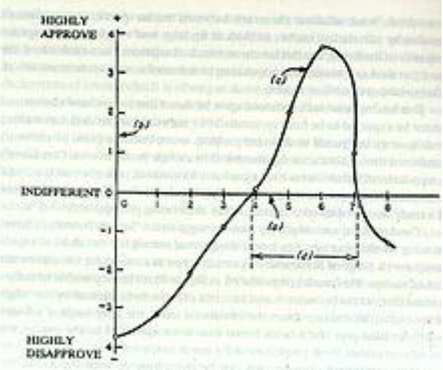
Subjective

Subjective norm is determined by beliefs about the extent to which important others want them to perform a behavior. Social influences are conceptualized in terms of the pressure that people perceive from important others to perform, or not to perform, a behavior.

Mathematical representations of norms

Over the last few decades, several theorists have attempted to explain social norms from a more theoretical point of view. By quantifying behavioral expectations graphically or attempting to plot the logic behind adherence, theorists hoped to be able to predict whether or not individuals would conform. The Return Potential Model and Game Theory provide a slightly more economic conceptualization of norms, suggesting individuals can calculate the cost or benefit behind possible behavioral outcomes. Under these theoretical frameworks, choosing to obey or violate norms becomes a more deliberate, quantifiable decision.

Return Potential Model



Developed in the 1960s, the Return Potential Model provides a method for plotting and visualizing group norms. In the regular coordinate plane, the amount of behavior exhibited is plotted on the X-axis while the amount of group acceptance or approval gets plotted on the Y-axis. The graph represents the potential return or positive outcome to an individual for a given behavioral norm. Theoretically, one could plot a point for each increment of behavior how much the group likes or dislikes that action. For example, it may be the case that among first-year graduate students, strong social norms around how many daily cups of coffee you drink exist. If the return curve in Figure 1 correctly displays the example social norm, we can see that if someone drinks 0 cups of coffee a day, the group strongly disapproves. The group does not approve of member behavior until someone hits four cups of coffee a day; the graduate students (as represented by the return curve) find it excessive to drink more than seven cups, however, as the approval again dips below zero. As exhibited by the coffee example, the return potential model displays for each increment of behavior how much group approval one can anticipate.

Point of Maximum Return. The point with the greatest y-coordinate is called the point of maximum return, as it represents the amount of behavior the group likes the best. While c in Figure 1 is labeling the return curve in general, the highlighted point just above it at X=6, represents the point of maximum return. Extending our above example, the point of maximum return for first-year graduate students would be 6 cups of coffee; they receive the most social approval for drinking exactly that many cups. Any more or any fewer cups would decrease the approval.

Range of Tolerable Behavior

Label d represents the range of tolerable behavior, or the amount of action the group finds acceptable.[2] It encompasses all the positive area under the curve. In Figure 1, the range of tolerable behavior extends is 3, as the group approves of all behavior from 4 to 7 and 7-4=3. Carrying over our coffee example again, we can see that first-years only approve of having a limited number of cups of coffee (between 4 and 7); more than 7 cups or fewer than 4 would fall outside the range of tolerable behavior. Norms can have a narrower or wider range of tolerable behavior. Typically, a narrower range of behavior indicates a behavior with greater consequences to the group.

Intensity

The intensity of the norm tells how much the group cares about the norm, or how much group affect is at stake to be won or lost. It is represented in the Return Potential Model by the total amount of area subsumed by the curve, regardless of whether the area is positive or negative. A norm with low intensity would not vary far from the x-axis; the amount of approval or disapproval for given behaviors would be closer to zero. A high-intensity norm, however, would have more extreme approval ratings. The intensity of the norm appears high, as few behaviors invoke a rating of indifference.

Crystallization

Finally, norm crystallization refers to how much variance exists within the curve; translated from the theoretical back to the actual norm, it shows how much agreement exists between group members about the approval for a given amount of behavior. It may be that some members believe the norm more central to group functioning than others. A group norm like how many cups of coffee first years should drink would probably have low crystallization, since a lot of individuals have varying beliefs about the appropriate amount of caffeine to imbibe; in contrast, the norm of not plagiarizing another student's work would likely have high crystallization, as people uniformly agree on the behavior's unacceptability. Showing the overall group norm, the Return Potential Model in Figure 1 does not indicate the crystallization. Another Return Potential Model, however, that plotted individual data points alongside the cumulative norm, could demonstrate the variance and allow us to deduce crystallization.

Game theory

Another general formal framework that can be used to represent the essential elements of the social situation surrounding a norm is the repeated game of game theory.A norm gives a person a rule of thumb for how they should behave. However, a rational person only acts according to the rule if it is optimal for them. The situation can be described as follows. A norm gives an expectation of how other people act in a given situation (macro). A person acts optimally given the expectation (micro). For a norm to be stable, people's actions must reconstitute the expectation without change (micro-macro feedback loop). A set of such correct stable expectations is known as a Nash equilibrium. Thus, a stable norm must constitute a Nash equilibrium. From a game-theoretical point of view, there are two explanations for the vast variety of norms that exist throughout the world. One is the difference in games. Different parts of the world may give different environmental contexts and different people may have different values, which may result in a difference in games. The other is equilibrium selection not explicable by the game itself. Equilibrium selection is closely related to coordination. For a simple example, driving is common throughout the world, but in some countries people drive on the right and in other countries people drive on the left (see coordination game). A framework called comparative institutional analysis is proposed to deal with the game theoretical structural understanding of the variety of social norms.

Examples of norms

Norms affect the way one behaves in public. When one enters an elevator, it is expected that one turns around to face the doors. An example of a social norm violation would be to enter the elevator and remain facing the rest of the people.[19] The community has much to do with the development of social norms. Although it is not illegal to not be courteous, it is a social norm.

Social Norms

Social norms grow out of social value and both serve to differentiate human social behavior from that of other species. The significance of learning in behavior varies from species to species and is closely linked to processes of communication. Only human beings are capable of elaborate symbolic communication and of structuring their behavior in terms of abstract preferences that we have called values. Norms are the means through which values are expressed in behavior.

Norms generally are the rules and regulations that groups live by. Or perhaps because the words, rules and regulations, call to mind some kind of formal listing, we might refer to norms as the standards of behavior of a group. For while some of the appropriate standards of behavior in most societies are written down, many of them are not that formal. Many are learned, informally, in interaction with other people and are passed "that way from generation to generation.The term "norms" covers an exceedingly wide range of behavior. So that the whole range of that behavior may be included. Sociologists have offered the following definition. Social norms are rules developed by a group of people that specify how people must, should, may, should not, and must not behave in various situations.Some norms are defined by individual and societies as crucial to the society. For example, all members of the group are required to wear clothing and to bury their dead. Such "musts" are often labeled "mores", a term coined by the American sociologist William Graham Sumner.

Many social norms are concerned with "should "; that is, there is some pressure on the individual to conform but there is some leeway permitted also. The 'should behaviors' are what Sumner called "folk-ways"; that is, conventional ways of doing things that are not defined as crucial to the survival of either the individual or the society. The 'should behaviors' in our own society include the prescriptions that people's clothes should be clean, and that death should be recognized with public funerals. A complete list of the should behaviors in a complex society would be virtually without end.

The word "May" in the definition of norms indicates that, in most groups, there is a wide range of behaviors in which the individual is given considerable choice. To continue the illustration, in Western countries girls may select to wear dresses or halters and jeans. Diets may be done through trainers at the gym or through the benefit of Medifast coupons, some people may even prefer diets advertised on tv. Funerals may be held with or without flowers, with the casket open or closed, with or without religious participation, and so on. We have confined our examples to just three areas, but students should be able to construct their own examples from all areas of life.

The remainder of the definition, including the 'should-not' and the 'must-not' behaviours, probably does not require lengthy illustration because such examples are implicit in what has already been said. One should not belch in public, dump garbage in the street, run stop signs, or tell lies. One must not kill another person or have sexual intercourse with one's sister or brother.

Social norms cover almost every conceivable situation, and they vary from standards where almost complete conformity is demanded to those where there is great freedom of choice. Norms also vary in the kinds of sanctions that are attached to violation of the norms. Since norms derive from values, and since complex societies have multiple and conflicting value systems, it follows that norms frequently are in conflict also.

Taking the illustration of American sex norms, two proscriptive norms prohibit premarital intercourse and extramarital intercourse. But many boys also have been taught that sex is good and that they should seek to "score" with girls whenever possible. Somewhat similarly, girls have been taught that promiscuous intercourse before marriage is bad; but they have also been taught that sex is acceptable within true love relationships. Members of both sexes, then, find themselves faced with conflicting demands for participation in sex and for abstinence from it. They also discover that there are sanctions associated with either course of action.

Normative conflict is also deeply involved in social change. As statistical norms come to differ too blatantly from existing prescriptive norms, new prescriptive norms give sanction to formerly prohibited behavior and even extend it. Recent changes in the sex norms of teenage and young adult groups provide examples. The change is more apparent in communal living groups where sometimes there is an explicit ideology of sexual freedom and the assumption that sexual activities will be shared with all members of the group. In less dramatic fashion, the change is evident among couples who simply begin to live together without the formality of a marriage ceremony

Values

The term 'value' has a meaning in sociology that is both similar to and yet distinct from the meaning assigned to it in everyday speech. In sociological usage, values are group conceptions of the relative desirability of things. Sometimes 'value' means 'price'. But the sociological concept of value is far broader than here neither of the objects being compared can be assigned a price.

What is the value, for illustration, of the right of every human being to dignity in comparison to the need to improve the technical aspects of education? This issue is directly involved in the desegregation of the public schools and has been debated bitterly. Some attempts have been made to estimate the dollar costs of the old system of segregated schools and, more recently, estimates have been made of the costs of using both black and white children to end segregation. Most of the social costs of the two systems, however, defy statement in monetary terms and most people take their stand on the issue in terms of deeply held convictions about what is important in life.

The idea of deeply held convictions is more illustrative of the sociological concept of value than is the concept of price.

In addition, there are four other aspects of the sociological concept of value. They are: (1) values exist at different levels of generality or abstraction; (2) values tend to be hierarchically arranged (3) values are explicit and implicit in varying degrees; and (4) values often are in conflict with one another.

In sociology, you will hear the term "norm" quite often. Norms are the specific cultural expectations for how to behave in a given situation. They are the agreed-upon expectations and rules by which the members of a culture behave. Norms vary from culture to culture, so some things that are considered norms in one culture may not be in another culture. For example, in America it is a norm to maintain direct eye contact when talking with others and it is often considered rude if you do not look at the person you are speaking with. In Asian, on the other hand, averting your eyes when conversing with others is a sign of politeness and respect while direct eye contact is considered rude.

Cultural Values; Norms and Sanctions

Many of the rules of our society we abide by subconsciously wearing clothes, stopping at lights, etc. Why do we "agree” to these rules?

Cultural values = shared assumptions about what is good, right or important What is considered good, right or important in one culture may be considered bad, wrong or unimportant in another.

Cultural values may change over time. In a complex society this may happen relatively quickly.

Med School changed to COPS: women in the workforce, small cars instead of big ones.

Values of Americans?

1. Individual Endeavour - the most "respected" are often the money-makers.
2. Education

3. Bigness - homes, businesses building, stadiums, planes, etc.
4. Spatial movement - cover long distances for movies, work, etc.
5. Time - time is money. Computers make things happen in less time. “Get here On time!'
6. Technology - invention/advances are continuous
7. Physical comfort - Lazy-boy chair, work overtime to get more money to make our lives more comfortable
8. Self-improvement-physical, educational (foreign languages, correspondence courses).

Canadians' Values?

Make a list of some values you believe Canadians share.

Social Norms :

Group-shared rules of behaviour which in turn are based on the shared values of a community¬: examples: wearing clothes, paying bills, obeying traffic signals, remaining silent in a library, standing for the anthem, brushing our teeth. One who breaks the norms (does not follow the rules) is called a deviant. Some people are expected to behave in certain ways. This depends on their role in the community. Example: at the scene of an accident the role of the doctor is different than the role of the onlooker when injured people must be taken care of. The centre of a football team is expected to do a certain job on the field while the quarterback is expected to do another.

Suspension of the norms may occur under special circumstances. Ex: Ambulances Fire engines rushing to an accident

Kind of norms:

- **Folkways:** the etiquette and customs of a people that are not of critical importance to the society. Ex: Playing a trumpet late at night when others can hear it. Be courteous to older people. Don’t park in the parking zone. For infractions of some folkways you may be reprimanded or be considered boorish, thoughtless or a nuisance but you would not be considered evil or immoral. Spanking naughty children is a folkway.

- **Mores:** rules of behaviorthat is very important since violation would endanger the basic stability of a society. Ex: Do not kill, steal, set fire to your neighbor's house, cheat on exams (marks tell other that you are better than you really are), do not lie. One who violates the mores is considered immoral. Can be stated negatively or positively: ex: don't kill = Let others live.
- **Laws:** the more complex a society becomes, the more its folkways and mores are turned into laws.The difference between laws and mores: laws are set up and enforced by the state. Mores are setup, maintained and enforced by public sentiment. Laws are thus formalized norms that specify the rules and carry the threat of punishment. They are the most clearly defined of the three kinds of social norms.

Why does every society have norms? The way people keep order can be quite different in different parts of the world. It is based on the values people hold dear.

What makes people in a society conform to the norms?
Internalization =the belief that a norm is good, useful or appropriate. They obey and feel others should. Ex: we have internalized what to do with a napkin. Did Genie?

- **Sanctions =** rewards or punishments that a society sets up to enforce the norms. Done to protect society from chaos.
    - *Positive sanctions*=rewards (promise, awards, bonuses)
    - *Negative sanctions* = punishment (ridicule, fines, imprisonment, beatings, spankings)physical sanctions = bring physical pain or pleasure. Ex: Having it brings pleasure, losing it brings pain. (A spanking also brings pain.)
    - *Psychological sanctions* = address the feelings and emotions of a person. They can make one feel good or bad. Positive psychological sanctions are found in compliments ribbons, badges and awards.

Norms→Every society has expectations about how its members should and should not behave. A norm is a guideline or an expectation for behavior. Each society makes up its own rules for behavior and decides when those rules have been violated and what to do about it. Norms change constantly.

How Norms Differ

Norms differ widely among societies, and they can even differ from group to group within the same society.

Different settings: Wherever we go, expectations are placed on our behavior. Even within the same society, these norms change from setting to setting.

Example: The way we are expected to behave in church differs from the way we are expected to behave at a party, which also differs from the way we should behave in a classroom.

Different countries: Norms are place-specific, and what is considered appropriate in one country may be considered highly inappropriate in another.

Example: In some African countries, it's acceptable for people in movie theaters to yell frequently and make loud comments about the film. In the United States, people are expected to sit quietly during a movie, and shouting would be unacceptable.

Different time periods: Appropriate and inappropriate behavior often changes dramatically from one generation to the next. Norms can and do shift over time.

Example: In the United States in the 1950s, a woman almost never asked a man out on a date, nor did she pay for the date. While some traditional norms for dating prevail, most women today feel comfortable asking men out on dates and paying for some or even all of the expenses.

Norm Categories

Sociologists have separated norms into four categories: folkways, mores, laws, and taboos.

Folkways

A folkway is a norm for everyday behavior that people follow for the sake of convenience or tradition. People practice folkways simply because they have done things that way for a long time. Violating a folkway does not usually have serious consequences.

Example: Holding the door open for a person right behind you is a folkway.

Mores:

A more (pronounced MORE-ay) is a norm based on morality, or definitions of right and wrong. Since mores have moral significance, people feel strongly about them, and violating a more usually results in disapproval.

Example: Parents who believe in the more that only married people should live together will disapprove of their son living with his girlfriend. They may consider their son's action a violation of the moral guidelines for behavior.

Laws : A law is a norm that is written down and enforced by an official agency. Violating a law results in a specific punishment.

Example: It is illegal in most countries to drive a car while drunk, and a person violating this law may get cited for driving under the influence (DUI), which may bring a fine, loss of driver's license, or even jail time.

Taboos

A taboo is a norm that society holds so strongly that violating it results in extreme disgust. The violator is often considered unfit to live in that society.

Example: In most countries, cannibalism and incest are considered taboo. In some Muslim cultures, eating pork is taboo because the pig is considered unclean.

Deviance

Where there are rules, there are rule breakers. Sociologists call the violation of a norm deviance. The word deviant has taken on the negative connotation of someone who behaves in disgusting or immoral ways, but to sociologists, deviant is anyone who doesn’t follow a norm, in either a good way or a bad way. See Chapter 6 for more about deviance.

Example: Most people don’t graduate from college with a 4.0 grade point average, so sociologists view someone who does graduate with a 4.0 as deviant. Likewise, most Americans get married at some point in their lives, so someone who chooses not to marry is sociologically a deviant.

Although deviance can be good and even admirable, few societies could tolerate the chaos that would result from every person doing whatever he or she pleased.Social control refers to the methods that societies devise to encourage people to observe norms. The most common method for maintaining social control is the use of sanctions, which are socially constructed expressions of approval or disapproval. Sanctions can be positive or negative, and the ways societies devise to positively or negatively sanction behaviors are limited only by the society’s imagination.

Positive Sanctions

A positive sanction rewards someone for following a norm and serves to encourage the continuance of a certain type of behavior.

Example: A person who performs well at his or her job and is given a salary raise or a promotion is receiving a positive sanction. When parents reward a child with money for earning good grades, they are positively sanctioning that child's behavior.

Negative Sanctions

A negative sanction is a way of communicating that a society, or some group in that society, does not approve of a particular behavior. The optimal effect of a negative sanction is to discourage the continuation of a certain type of behavior.

Example: Imprisoning a criminal for breaking the law, cutting off a thief's hands for stealing, and taking away a teenager's television privileges for breaking curfew are all negative sanctions.

Positive or Negative?

A sanction is not always clearly positive or negative. A child who throws a temper tantrum may find he has everyone's attention, but while his parents might be telling him to stop, the attention he receives for his behavior is actually a positive sanction. It increases the likelihood that he'll do it again. Attention can be a powerful positive sanction, while lack of attention can be a strong negative

Sociology is the systematic study of human behavior in groups. It examines how people interact in different social structures such as teams, families, at work and in online communities. It is a branch of, and is often synonymous with, social science. It has a broad reach, encompassing all aspects of human social interaction, allowing it to cover a wide range of topics including religion, sexuality, gender, culture, education and deviance.

Two fundamental concepts within sociology are those of norms and values. They help to describe the framework of perceptions and ideas which influence an individual's or group's behavior.

Norms are the behavioral expectation that a group will follow. An action dictated by socially approved rules, a norm will differ from group to group. The rough-housing between members of a football team is unlikely to be acceptable in an office environment.

Norms can be divided into descriptive and injunctive varieties. A descriptive norm is an individual's perception of the usual action in a particular set of circumstances, such as joining the back of a queue. An injunctive norm is the perception of what is acceptable or unacceptable within a society, as determined by the values of a particular culture. While in one culture haggling for prices is expected and encouraged, in another it can be seen as offensive.

Values are the ideas which define what is good, right or fair. They are held by individuals and groups and are a product of the culture they find themselves within. A person's values may be tied to their religious or political beliefs, influenced by their family, heritage and upbringing, or by their social environment. Specific to an individual, they differ from person to person. An example of which could be the level of altruism or selfishness they show to others.

A group's values are determined by the values of it's members. They define what is important to the group and can be demonstrated in those individuals a group chooses to praise or condemn. The brave fire fighter, the compassionate hospice nurse, the evil drug dealer or soulless murderer all show traits and behaviours regarded by the society as inherently good or evil.

Not all members of the society will share these values. Some may find themselves forming a smaller group with others who share their differing values, thus forming a subculture. They can find a basis in any shared social characteristic, from taste in music to ethnicity and can involve particular styles of dress or language which distinguish them from the primary culture. For example, naturists do not share society's values in regards to social nudity and are clearly differentiated by their alternative choice of dress code.

Norms and values are closely linked, with norms outlining acceptable behaviour in a situation while values determine what should be considered good or bad.

Cultural Norms

Norms are the agreed- upon expectations and rules by which a culture guides the behavior of its members in any given situation. Of course, norms vary widely across cultural groups. Americans, for instance, maintain fairly direct eye contact when conversing with others. Asians, on the other hand, may avert their eyes as a sign of politeness and respect.

Sociologists speak of at least four types of norms: folkways, mores, taboos, and laws. Folkways, sometimes known as “conventions” or “customs,” are standards of behavior that are socially approved but not morally significant. For example, belching loudly after eating dinner at someone else's home breaks an American folkway. Mores are norms of morality. Breaking mores, like attending church in the nude, will offend most people of a culture. Certain behaviors are considered taboo, meaning a culture absolutely forbids them, like incest in U.S. culture. Finally, laws are a formal body of rules enacted by the state and backed by the power of the state. Virtually all taboos, like child abuse, are enacted into law, although not all mores are. For example, wearing a bikini to church may be offensive, but it is not against the law.

Members of a culture must conform to its norms for the culture to exist and function. Hence, members must want to conform and obey rules. They first must internalize the social norms and values that dictate what is “normal” for the culture; then they must socialize, or teach norms and values to, their children. If internalization and socialization fail to produce conformity, some form of “social control” is eventually needed. Social control may take the form of ostracism, fines, punishments, and even imprisonment

Social Values and Norms

Values and norms are evaluative beliefs that synthesize affective and cognitive elements to orient people to the world in which they live. Their evaluative element makes them unlike existential beliefs, which focus primarily on matters of truth or falsehood, correctness or incorrectness. Their cognitive element makes them unlike motives that can derive from emotions or psychological drives. Values and norms involve cognitive beliefs of approval or disapproval. Although they tend to persist through time and therefore faster continuity in society and human personality, they also are susceptible to change (Moss and Susman 1980; Alwin 1994).

The evaluative criteria represented in values and norms influence the behavior of subject units at multiple levels (e.g., individuals, organizations, and societies) as well as judgments about the behavior of others, which also can influence behavior. For example, values and norms affect the evaluation of individuals as suitable...

Norms and values

The purpose of this document is to research, from a sociological perspective the norms, values and socialization that is essential for family, society and culture. These key attributes provide the individual with key skills, behaviours and habits necessary to enable participation within their own society - observing the rules and boundaries established within their "Norms and Values" and modifying and changing behaviours throughout their life time

"The Culture of Society is the way of life of its members; the collection of ideas and of habits which the learn and transmit from generation to generation"

Ralph Linton

Norms are the social and cultural guidelines by which we live our lives, and both knowingly and unknowingly conform and comply too during our life time. Out norms are key attributes that define our behaviors' and can determine the groups and individuals, social acceptance - Or non acceptance. We learn how to behave through a complex combination of stimulus - Visual, Oral and Sensory. As we grow in our mental maturity and awareness, the influence of family, environment and culture, combine to define our Norms. These key developmental elements combined, influence and determine, personal and social interactive abilities - developing social skills to recognise social boundaries, acceptable behaviors' and responses. Therefore our Norms are intrinsic to our development, our personal behavior, and social acceptance. Key aspects of our "Norms" are:

Convention - Being a standard, non culturally specific element within the Norms of convention.An example being that an individual is expected to follow the "rules" which are an established expectation of behaviors, within the context of conventional social acts and responses.

An example of a culturally specific "Injunctive Norm" is when a Cultural belief, such as polygamy is accepted as a "Norm". This is defined as "Culturally Specific" as this practice is not legally practised or recognised within the Western Society. An exception could be the Mormons, who have Sects that practice polygamy, based mainly in America. The main Mormon Churchm the Latter Day Saints, no longer advocates such practice, although there are certain Mormon Fundamentalists Sects, whose religious fundamental belief systems adhere to the original writings of Brigham Young.

Within many Muslim cultures, a husband can legally take more than one wife. This practice is not recognised legally with Western cultures.Sociological Values may be material or nonmaterial, internal or external. Values and beliefs are culturally specific - Given this the evaluation of their respective value is specific to the individual or group.

An example might be, when an individual uses their Core value system, they relate into either a cultural or belief system that is specific to the influences within their social "Norms and Value" origin, group or society. Ultimately Social "Norms and Values" cover a wide range of Sociological study.

Example of Cultural Values defined: Sociological "Norms and Values" under stress from changes, can impact an individual, group, society or cultural perspective. Change or deviation when combined with poor or irrational judgment - that sits outside the "Norms and Values" of either, a specific Culture or Belief System, can have a mired level of impacts. Therefore Norms and Values can and do change. What may be acceptable as an individual would not necessarily be acceptable at group level. Differentials on the range of what would be acceptable within their own personal attitude and value system is specific.

Change to an Individuals "Norm and Values" can be challenged by the individual on the basis that the "Worth or Value is not acceptable to them - because it fails to resonate within them as acceptable as a Social or belief Value. Alternatively if may present as an abstract Value and hold no specific desirability. Values are abstract in nature and general. A culture's values are its ideals about what is good, right, fair, and just. Sociologists disagree, however, on how to conceptualise values. There is a conflict theory that focuses on how values differ between groups within a culture. The National Centre for social research annual report for 2009 indicates that the British values are changing, the 2009 survey consisted of more than 4,000 interviews with a representative, random sample of people in Britain. It finding have shown that change in society's values is generally slow and is impacted by the media and other external stimuli.

Functional sociologist Talcott Parsons noted that Americans share the common value of the "American work ethic," Whilst this is most certainly a cultural social observation which encourages hard work. Herbert Spencer one of the first British Sociologists stated that "Society exists for the benefit of its members, not the members for the benefit of society." Common values within western societies are based on materialism, and money, although reliance on science and technology, and the role of democracy and freedom are key norms and values that exist - although these can change during stressed and unexpected change. A culture may have conflicting values; an example would be that value of materialistic success may be in opposition to that of charitable acts. Equally the value of social equality may be in opposition to that of the value placed on the individual state. This can be explained as a contraction in what people say, what they really think, and what they do. Social pressure to conform can be a deciding factor, as individuals own norms and values system will be a sub conscious factor in that decision making.

So when does socialization begin; its starts as soon as we are born and ultimately ends with our death. As soon as a child is born, primary socialization begins. In every instance of social interaction, a child can uses this period as a learning experience - particularly in terms of cultural concepts of identity, social roles, and norms of behaviour. The very young child is totally reliant on its parents or carers. The baby will initially respond to the external stimuli provided by parents or carers. The main senses initially used by the child will be responsive, such as when they are hungry, in discomfit, or want human contact/ touch. They will respond to sound and vision - this is important time for child/parent/careersocialization - this represents a very emotional time, and the close bonds of love and loyalty, which in theory will last a life time, are established.

As chronological development of the child takes place, by the age of two, a child will be in procession of a rudimentary set of primary skills and behaviours. The child will be able to copy its parents and siblings, and will be learning a wider set of social skills - these will be both culturally specific and socially generic. The socialisation of the child within its own society and culture will be established during an intense period of self development and awareness; children acquire a sense of their "self". This is an important developmental milestone that occurs between 18/24 months.

Psychologist Jean Piaget defined the fact that children progress through clear stages in their ability to think.The Sensorimotor Stage, which is from birth to age two, is when the developing child's reliance on "touch" for information about it surrounding world is the most commonly used of the child's developing skills. They will also experience the tactile warmth from parent/carers and will also gain stimulation and development from, copying, gestures and actions - taste is also a key action of the developing child , and they will put most objects to their mouth, toys, food and potentially anything they can get their hands on. This period represents a time of great discovery and learning socially, and is part of the set of primary socialisation skills, which are prerequisite key developmental milestones. The next stage as described by Piaget is the Pre-Operational Stage. This stage generally starts between ages' Two to Seven. Children now have the ability to think symbolically, that being to relate in abstract or via simple symbols. However they cannot perceive the world from another person's perspective. This period also differs from later ones, because it is a time when children learn through hands-on manipulation of objects through copying, play and trial and error. When a child reaches the Operational Stage, ages of 7-12, Young children can now begin to think and reason rationally and logically. At approximately age seven or eight children enter "the age of reason," when they can manipulate their own ideas, and apply learnt concepts. A child will now possess the ability to independently interact and abide to a set of social rules and boundaries. They achieve this via the mediums of school, social, family, cultural settings. Children are able to rationalise, apply logic, use and interact with media, and participate in debate verbally. Children are able to recognise "self", which is an important milestone in self development: as is the ability to recognise their place socially and culturally. Finally a child moves to the Logical Stage at ages 12 and on. The child and young adolescent, are capable of complex abstract, logical thought. They are able to have reasoned logical discussion, reach decisions based on fact, and are able to initiate and formulate argument and debate. They have a fully developed sense of self within their family, society and culture.

The family plays a significant and defining role in the primary socialisation of a child. The family acts as the primary socialising agent for the first few years of life; however Socialisation in the family varies greatly, and can be dependent on Social, cultural, ideological and ethnical differences. Within Britain, the structure of family has changed; there are more working class single parent's families, who have no immediate family support available to provide child care - this has resulted in child care providers having a far greater role in childhood socialisation over the last 20 years. One of the most important primary functions of the family is to produce and reproduce biologically, socially and culturally-however, producing children is not the only function of the family. A child's perspective is that the family is its core and primary socialising agent; however the family perspective is one of responsibility, to provide the growing child with the necessary skills and knowledge in their socialisation and acceptance in their common culture. From the parental/carer point of view the family is the central nucleus that provides the care, learning, development, social, cultural education: the goal of which is to socialise and incorporate cultural ideologies and values in their children. However there are many variants in societies and cultures, which place more emphasis on the sexual division of labour, marriage, and the resulting relationship between family groups and the economics.

An example being; that child labour is still practised illegally and openingly in Asia, and parts of Africa. Many of these countries have poor economies and the communities and families require a child to work to contribute to the household or village - this can be the difference between life and death. Equally the value of a male child may be greater than that of a female child, as in many cultures, males are preferred for financial and social reasons. In time of hardship cultures such as the Eskimo's would practise infanticide, if they were lacking enough food or provisions, this was a decision made on the basis that males contribute more, as they grow in to hunters and support the community, where as a females contribution was seen as less valuable to the community.

As in family, education is an important agent of socialisation and the school environment is a formal agent of socialisation. The purpose of education is to socialise children in selected skills and knowledge, preparing them with so that they can build on the skills and knowledge acquired, as they grow and mature. The formal education system in England starts at Playschool for ages 2-4 - this is now a socially acceptable form of early socialisation. The child then progresses to a more formalised, yet still free play, Reception Class- these are mainly attached to a primary school, which the child then transition into - thereby keeping the social group intact. Primary education provides a child with a formalised approach to learning. The child will learn new social rules and boundaries; these will build on the norms and values that they have been taught by their parents/carers. The family influence is still very strong, as these age groups are heavily dependent upon their family. The child continues its primary socialisation via classroom activities, playing, and school social interaction, within its peer group. The peer group becomes important, as it is based on a child's ability to interact, make friends and socialise - the pressure to conform and be accepted, increases with age. There are many reasons for this: such as social standing IE: family wealth, material possession, ethnicity, extrovert /introverts behaviors' and the pecking order of favorability within the peer group.

Exclusion from a peer group is a highly stressful and can be initiated by the school due to behavioral or attendance issues - these issues would require remedial agreement and action between the school, child and parent. Wider involvement of care agencies, such as educational psychologists and family welfare social workers, would be required if the family were found to be unable to function or cope, due to a verity of social or financial reasons.

An example being: a male child of 4 with undiagnosed ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) who in reception class could not settle, presenting as disruptive, Impulsive, restlessness with a high level of hyperactivity - and an inability to concentrate or focus for any period of time. ADHD will often present as inattentiveness, and will prevent a child from learning and will stunt their socialisation if not addressed. This child was excluded from school at 5 years old. At this point a wider most specialized group of social, education workers - worked with the parents, and school, after ADHD was diagnosed. Once the appropriate level of medication (Ritalin- commonly used for ADHD) was prescribed, an immediate change in behaviour was evident. A plan of resocialisation and integration was applied, and an educational statement was issued by the local educational authority. This ensured the funding necessary for one to one support, and additional help required to enable the child to be educated and resocialised. One of the key learning aids for this child reintegration was the use of media - the use of media in the home and school, leisure environments have become an integrated part of contemporary life. Such is the impact of Media, that it has become a dominant agent of socialisation. Children are exposed from a very early age to media; examples being a music DVD, Television or Computer games - which can be interactive, educational and agility based. Multimedia is used in a variety of ways within the family, and is seen a key aspect of socialisation and development. Equally Multi Media is used within the formal setting of school and is used regularly as part of an Educational programme. There have been negative aspects in attributed to media and the violence seen in games, music, TV and film.

Secondary Socialisation is the wider process of learning; a child learns what is expected of them, and what is acceptable/appropriate behaviour, for them; within a small group that is part of a larger society and culture. Secondary socialisation represents a new developmental stage, and is generally associated with teenagers and adults. The social changes we experience are different to those of primary socialisation. An example would be, starting a new a level of education at college or university, relocating to a new environment or a change in social status or society. Some students may be transferring from a rural community to a more urban environment, whilst others may be international students being socialised to the British way of life. Others may be mature students without any prior higher educational experience. Moreover, any social structure can act as a socialising agent. For example, the work environment socialises the employees to conform to their way of business and their culture. In most organisations employees have clear responsibilities to respect authority, adhere to corporate policies, and work hard in exchange for financial compensation in the form of income and status promotions. Also, the wider public venues we all go to; such as shopping centres, libraries, hospitals, football matches, act as social interaction and educate us about new boundaries and constraints - thereby influencing our behaviour. When considering the norms of behaviour, of passengers on airplanes; those of a diner at a Michelin Star restaurant; or the fans at a Rugby or Tennis game. We all conform and adapt without conscious thought a large percentage of our lives - this conditioning allows us to move in a complex structure of Culture and Society. The secondary socialisation process is crucial particularly in times of stress and change. Transition from infancy to childhood to adolescence and adulthood are all companied by a socialisation process that is designed socially and culturally to give the individual, all the skills necessary to grow and co-exist. If the process of secondary socialisation fails, due to internal or external factors, the individual may not be in possession of the necessary social or cultural skills to cope logically and rationally. This situation could lead to a change in their values and social group. As an adult we experience the socialisation process through changes in careers, family structure, personal relationships, interests, such as politics. As our lives continue, we move to retirement age, the changes in family and career are now viewed differently; our priorities change, as situations such as being, unwell, or alone take precedence. The extended older family highlight the changing cultural values in the socialisation process.

With the introduction of media, older generations, are now learning and experiencing new experiences of information and communication, which is a new form of socialisation for them. This is a new agent of socialisation and is a powerful teacher and influencing agent within the context of socialisation, second only to Family. The media plays a significant role in shaping the social attitudes and social behaviours of our children and adolescents... Parents do exert the most influence on children; however the mass media can be considered secondary agents of socialisation.

For example, viewing of advertisements is related to lower self-esteem and depression among children who come from low-income families. It is likely that children feel bad about themselves because they cannot have the products that are advertised on television.

Media and Marketing work hand in hand to influence our views - We are targeted as either specific social groups, age groups and economic groups - specifically to sell Products and Services. What we buy, where we buy, how we spend, and who we vote for, is heavily influenced by a range of Multi - Media. Such as The TV, internet, Radio, advertising in magazines.

Gender identity is one of the most important elements of our sense of self. Some aspects of gender identity are rooted in our biology, such as our physical strength. However most of our gender identity is culturally defined. As we grow and age we develop our self awareness, and how we should relate to others, and the role we play in a larger society. The lessons children learn and the processes through which cultural norms are passed from one generation to the next is known as socialisation. Gender socialisation shows that there are roles, or cultural expectations and norms, which are associated with each sexual classification - Sociologists make distinctions between sex and gender. Whilst sex is based on biological factors, gender is the based on cultural factors that stereotypically construct different social roles for men and women. Therefore Gender socialisation is the process through which males and females learn gender specific appropriate behaviour, dress, personality characteristics, and demeanour. While gender socialisation is an ongoing and lifelong - the majority of the sociological theories tend to focus on early childhood socialisation, as the key factor in Gender determination - Four such perspectives are the psychoanalytical, cognitive development, social learning, and social interaction perspectives.

In all societies there is a need for resocialisation of an individual. Resocialisation is a sociological concept dealing with the process of mentally and emotionally "re-training" an individual so that they can exist in an environment other than that which he or she is used to.

Examples of a need for Resocialisation such as the release from prison, mental health institutions and the Army ; New recruits into the army are encouraged to bond, so that they can operate as a cohesive unit - and then the process is reversed for those who may have become institutionalized by their experiences in the socialization process. Without appropriate support and counseling, mental health problems could present. Equally if an individual have been institutionalized due to lengthy incarceration because of illness or a criminal offence - such as Murder: a staged plan of integration would be required, to allow assimilation and resocialisation to take place in society.

Chapter-5

Concept of Community in Indian Social Science

While identity has become a major theme of research in international anthropology and sociology, within Indian sociology research on this issue has not progressed to the extent required given the contemporary political and social situation. This is due in part to lack of an adequate theoretical apparatus, and in part to the confusion caused by the interpenetration of sociological categories and concepts with those employed beyond the academy. This paper attempts to work towards a conceptual clarification of the issues pertaining to identity and community in India by drawing on some of the recent debates within social-cultural anthropology (especially American) that have arisen out of studies of ethnicity, nationalism, and identity politics in other contexts. Two major theoretical problems are discussed: the relation between sociological and non-sociological concepts of community and identity (such as those employed by the media or in political discourses), and the related issue of the politics of academic knowledge. The insights gained from reviewing this literature are then used to critically assess discussions of community and identity in the Indian context.

Over the last decade or two, largely in response to the world-wide emergence of identity politics of various kinds' ethnic conflicts, separatist movements, fundamentalism identity has become a major theme of research and debate within international anthropology and sociology. While this interest has permeated Indian sociology as well, research along these lines here has not progressed to the extent required in the context of contemporary politics. In part this is due to lack of a theoretical apparatus within mainstream Indian sociology adequate to handle issues of identity, and in part to the immense confusion caused by the inter-penetration of sociological categories and concepts with those employed by leaders and activists of identitarian social movements. Therefore, before discussing the issue of contemporary discourses of identity and community, it is necessary to be very clear about our concepts and theoretical frame of reference. This paper is not about particular discourses of community or identity in India but about the concepts themselves. The objective is to raise some questions that should be kept in mind in any discussion of community or identity formation, but not to provide answers to those questions. To do this I draw on some of the recent debates surrounding issues of identity, ethnicity and nationalism within social-cultural anthropology (especially in the USA). The intention is to work towards a reframing of similar questions about community and identity in India, not by importing theoretical positions wholesale but by widening the context of the debate by comparison with examples taken from outside of India. Two major theoretical problems are discussed in this way: the relationship between sociological concepts of community and identity on the one hand, and the everyday conceptualizations employed in other contexts (e.g., in popular understandings, political and state discourses, and the media), on the other; and the related issue of the politics of academic knowledge.

Communities in the Indian sociological tradition

In this section I outline two major conceptualizations of ‘community’ -- a traditional one and a more recent one -- within Indian sociology (and other disciplines), which I tentatively term the ‘substantivist’ and the ‘constructivist’. I have formed these two broad categories somewhat artificially out of range theoretical positions, and acknowledge that this procedure necessarily entails over-simplification of the existing literature. Also, I have not attempted a thorough review of the literature but have referred to a small section of it for the sake of illustration.

The substantives approach :

The concept of community has played a central roie in the development of sociological discourses on Indian society. In general, ‘community’ has been associated with ‘traditional’ modes of social organisation (jati, village, religious sect) and opposed, implicitly or explicitly, to the individualism of modem western society. In the Dumontian view, for one, Indian forms of community are not just different institutionally but are based on a fundamentally different system of values. This kind of dichotomy is implicit in the anthropological understanding of the ‘jajmani system’, for example, as a non-monetary system for the exchange of goods and services within the relatively autonomous village. This system is counterpoised to the western market economy which is supposedly based on the activities of the rational self-seeking individual. For Dumont, the jajmani system is not merely an economic system but part of an entire cultural system, ‘oriented to the whole' the expression in the economic realm of traditional community (Fuller 1989). This conceptualisation clearly derives from one of the foundational dichotomies of sociology, that which opposes community (Gemeinschaft), composed of primordial bonds of blood, territory, culture, and/or language, to modem society (Gesellschaft), which is but a collectivity of atomised individuals. Similar themes can be found in other segments of the sociological literature, whether the focus is on caste, kinship, the joint family, or peasant movements.

While much has been written about these kinds of community/individual and east/west dichotomies within sociology, there is another dichotomous pair embedded in this discourse which may be even more fundamental: the opposition between the realm of culture (= religion = hierarchy = caste) and that of economy (= materiality = production/exchange = class). The reification of the jajmani system, for example, in which material relations of exchange are subsumed under caste/ community/ hierarchical structures (Fuller 1989), derives from a definition of Indian society as inherently 'cultural', i.e., not rooted in the material world. This in turn comes, at least in part, from colonial Indological traditions which emphasise the spirituality and 'other-worldliness' of Indian culture in explicit contrast to the materialism, rationality and 'this-worldliness' of western capitalist society (a la Weber). Although several efforts have been made to re-think such 'orientalist' constructions, the more basic culture/economy dichotomy onwhich they are based which is not specific to the Indian context has not been challenged.3 In fact, this dichotomy has been basic to much of sociological and anthropological theory right from its inception, probably stemming from the bifurcation of the social sciences into economics versus the rest. It also underpins one of sociology's central problematics, i.e., the relation between the realm of ideology, consciousness, beliefs, values (i.e., 'culture') and that of 'real' social or economic action and structures.

One of the forms in which this central opposition between culture and economy appeared in the context of India was in the 'caste vs class' debate of the 1970s. Those who argued that 'caste' is the central organising principle of Indian society did not dispute the presence of class, defined as some kind of economic inequality, but argued that class 'cuts across' caste divisions and therefore is less salient with regard to identity formation and social mobilisation. Similarly, the class theorists did not deny the existence of caste but simply subsumed it under class hierarchy or dismissed it as an epiphenomenon or as a relic of feudalism. For both, caste was defined as some kind of socio-cultural unit or ideological system based on the religious principle of hierarchy, and class as an economic phenomenon (Upadhya 1997). Under the terms of this debate, it was not possible to reverse the equation and understand class as ‘cultural’ or caste as ‘economic’, except in the most subsidiary way (e.g., the ‘economic’ appears as jajmani relations or as the ‘dominant caste’ with reference to land ownership).5 Thus, in the older sociological tradition, caste (= traditional culture) got defined in opposition to class (= economy).

There is another aspect of this conceptualisation of caste which is relevant here. Within much of the sociological literature, castes or jatis are defined not only externally in terms of their position within a hierarchical structure but also internally in terms of relations of kinship and marriage (and in the case of dominant castes, in their relation to land or territory). Jati as a kind of solidary unit made up of ‘primordial’ kinship-based units came to be equated with community, which in turn was identified as the locus of cultural tradition and identity. Even in the realm of politics, collective action is usually conceptualised in terms of caste or other ethnic identities. In other words, politics also gets subsumed by caste (as in Dumont), and implicitly this kind of politics (the ‘Indian’) is juxtaposed to the ‘other’ variety which is supposedly based on individual interests or instrumental goals.

The outcome of this theoretical trajectory has been the identification of ‘culturally’- defined groups (ethnic, religious, caste) as the authentic units of social organisation in India. The communities which make up Indian society are understood in terms of such categories, which are based on ‘real’ social relationships and rooted in Indian cultural and religious traditions. Although the presumption that such communities whether villages, jatis or kin groups are characterised internally by harmony, democracy and solidarity has long ago been discredited, the founding concept of community itself has not been adequately contested. Instead, it has been given a new lease on life through recent communitarian writings that posit the existence of a ‘real’ submerged community which has been denied and repressed by a non-authentic and all powerful state, itself a product of an imposed and alien ‘modernity’. In this discourse, the community is the repository of traditional culture and humane values; the state and market relations threaten to decimate the community, which is what gives identity, meaning and anchorage to the individual. It is significant that in such writings, ‘modernity’ has also reappeared as the central trope around which an understanding of contemporary India must be constructed. The notion of community employed in such communitarian (or semicommunitarian) discourses clearly has its roots in the older sociological tradition, as I argue below.

The constructivist approach

Recent work by a number of historians and anthropologists of Indian society takes a very different view by demonstrating that most of the communities we see today (religious groups, castes, tribes), and the identities on which they are based , are not survivals from pre-colonial times but are the creations of colonialism, politically constructed through the discourses and policies of colonial administration. These scholars (both historians and anthropologists) argue that caste and other community identities do not have roots in the hoary past but were in fact ‘invented’ quite recently. This ‘constructivist’ argument has brought the earlier substantives theories of caste and community into serious question. Many of these writers follow Foucault in identifying the (colonial) state as the primary or sole source of such identities. Through its disciplining and authorising practices, the argument goes, the state in a sense created civil society in line with the demands of governing and controlling large populations.

Perhaps the strongest statement of the ‘colonial construction of identity’ argument has been developed by

Dirks, who argues that the colonial regime robbed the caste system of its former political base and reconstructed it as a primarily religious or cultural institution and as the ‘authentic’ basis of Indian society. Because of the operations of colonial discourses and the politicisation of caste and other ‘community’ categories, caste “...became a specifically Indian colonial form of civil society, the most critical site for the textualization of social identity” (Dirks 1997:135). This colonial project, which involved an “official colonial sociology of knowledge” (1997:133), was reproduced in academic writings on India, especially of the Dumontian variety (1997:123). He concludes that the “...forms of casteism and communalism that continue to work against the imagined community of the nascent nation state have been imagined as well” (1997: 135).

A number of scholars have developed this kind of argument in various ways and in different contexts. Here I refer only to a short piece by Dipesh Chakrabarty (1995), who draws on the work of several others and therefore provides a convenient summary of the constructivist position. He argues that colonial rule introduced the modem bureaucratic state into India, which employed the typical techniques of government, surveillance and control that have been identified by Foucault. India’s people were measured, classified, and quantified through the censuses and other such information-gathering exercises in which invented community categories were central. Because governing practices entailed the counting and categorising of people in terms of collectivities, people began to see and organise themselves in terms of these categories, leading to the formation of new identities. As Sudipto Kaviraj (1992) has articulated it, pre-colonial communities which had ‘fuzzy’ boundaries were replaced with discrete categories which could be enumerated exactly and which claimed exclusive identification by their members. However, Chakrabarty suggests that this movement from ‘fuzzy’ to enumerated communities did not entail a complete change of consciousness for the people, who in their ‘everyday lives’ continue to have multiple or overlapping ethnic identities. Administrative categories produced the kinds of identities we see at work today, which are modem, public and imbued with political meaning, but these co-exist and interpenetrate with a more ‘fuzzy’ and private sense of community that exists, apparently, at the sub-political level (1995:3377). Chakrabarty argues that colonial governing practices reconstituted the meaning of ‘community’ or ‘ethnicity’, that people learned to participate in the public sphere through terms defined by the state, and that as a result we have a kind of modem ethnic consciousness in India in which the politics of cultural difference is primary (1995:3378). I return to examine this argument below. Invention of tradition: the anthropological view

As in the constructivist trend in the Indian literature, much of the recent work on ethnicity and nationalism within anthropology and other disciplines has moved away from substantivist conceptions of identity and community to highlight the ways in which collective identities are ‘constructed’ and politically mobilised. This ‘invention of tradition’ (following Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) literature within anthropology has focused mainly on indigenous movements in the Pacific and North America and on ethnic conflicts in Africa and Europe. By deconstructing notions of authenticity and tradition with regard to modem identities and showing them to be products of specific historical and political processes, these studies have led to a re-writing of the concept of culture itself.

Much of this work aims to critique what Appadurai has termed the ‘primordialist thesis’ of ethnic violence, which revolves around a concept of primordial group identities based on claims to shared blood, soil, or language (1997:140).

Underlying this thesis is the idea that social collectivities possess a “...collective conscience whose historical roots are in some distant past and are not easily changeable but are potentially available to ignition by new historical and political contingencies” (1997:141). The primordialist thesis, found in much of the mainstream writing on ethnic strife in Africa, Eastern Europe, and elsewhere, rests on a view of certain populations as ‘infantile’ and ‘non-modern’. Appadurai refers to this kind of popular understanding of all sub-national movements as tribalist as the ‘Bosnia Fallacy’ (1997:21). Instead he argues that ethnicity should be understood as a historically constituted form of social classification that is “... regularly misrecognized and naturalized as a prime mover in social life” (1997:140). In this view, politically mobilised ethnic communities can no longer be seen as ‘traditional’ collectivities that have failed to be subsumed within the state/civil society model, but instead appear as very modem identities which have been formed in the course of (post)modem history. According to Appadurai, the burgeoning of ethnicities in recent years can be understood precisely as identity politics directed against the state (rather than originating in pre-state identities or loyalties). Such ethnic or ‘culturalist’ movements involve the “...conscious mobilization of cultural differences in the service of a larger national or transnational politics” (Appadurai 1997:15).

We now have a large number of studies which illustrate the complexity of such processes of mobilisation or creation of cultural difference. Hanson’s (1989) work on the Maori of New Zealand, for example, suggests that the Maori ‘traditions’ that have been valorised in the current cultural revival are not indigenous but were constructed, drawing on colonial knowledge systems, in the process of resistance to European domination. Thomas (1992), writing on several Pacific indigenous movements, similarly suggests that ‘cultural objectification' is often a reactive process in which traditions are constructed around particular reified practices, symbols or identities against another kind of construction of identity. This is particularly true in the context of colonialism:

> Where colonialism has had a more sustained and repressive impact, indigenous peoples may come to couch their identity and resistance in terms made available by the dominant: they celebrate and affirm what colonialist discourse and practice subordinate and denigrate (1992:216)

According to this school of thought, it is no longer possible to presume that a social identity or tradition linked to a particular 'community' has an autonomous or authentic existence, and that it has been simply appropriated for political ends by an identitarian movement. Rather, traditions and identities are seen to be constructed in complex ways in an on-going process of cultural production, which includes politically motivated objectifications of culture, embodied in emblems of identity which represent the distinctiveness of the community or ethnic group. The process of objectification is a dialectical process in which "...dominant and dominated groups reify the attributes of both others and themselves in a self-fashioning process" (Thomas 1992:215). Even the realm of kinship, a seemingly autonomous domain, does not escape from this process, nor does religion, as is evident in the rise and near triumph of the politics of communalism in India. Thus, to understand the formation of any particular identitarian movement or social collectivity, one must look at its cultural specificities and the political and historical context in which it has arisen, and at the ways in which particular symbols or practices have been invoked and reworked by people in their strategies aimed at producing active political collectivities.

Politics of academic knowledge

Although anthropologists have documented a number of instances of identity construction through inventions of tradition, not all have been conscious of the fact that anthropological and other academic texts and discourses themselves have been implicated in such processes. Yet it is now clear that the social science disciplines, especially anthropology (but history as well), have come to play a major role in the formation and stabilisation of political identities and authorizations. The boundary between cultural or social analyses produced by academics and intellectuals, and the self-objectification by spokespersons of various communities or groups, is becoming increasingly porous (if indeed it was ever clear-cut). This interpenetration is manifested in various ways. As discussed above, the process of 'invention' of identities and traditions through the operations of colonial law or policies or by the writings of early amateur historians and ethnographers has been well-documented. A well-known example is the utilisation of anthropological texts (as well as the more recent active participation of anthropologists) in the construction of Maori traditions in the context of the 'Mana Maori' (Maori Power) movement in New Zealand (Hanson 1989). However, there has been somewhat less discussion of the continuing role played by the social sciences and history, through the media and instruments of the state, in the on-going reconstruction and representation of identities.

At a more abstract level, as Spencer (1990) points out in an insightful article on Sinhalese nationalism, the relationship between academic and political discourses about identity has an even deeper origin than this: both anthropology as a discipline and nationalism as an ideology were bom almost simultaneously from the same philosophical and political roots. The anthropological concept of culture derives directly .from the writings of Herder and other German romantics, and anthropology shares some of its central concepts with the discourses of nationalism as well as racism: culture, tradition, community, and so on (Spencer 1990:290; cf. Friedman 1994, Chap. 4). Anthropological explanations of nationalisms in cultural terms are therefore the dilemma outlined by Spencer has no real resolution, but he suggests that anthropologists recognise that "... we are arguing within the same world” as that of our subjects rather than from without (1990:290).

Anthropologists such as Appadurai have been troubled by the persistent interpretation of ethnic conflict in the media as ‘tribalism’, especially in the African context. Yet often the source of such interpretations has been anthropology itself. Besteman (1996a, 1996b) shows how the terrible carnage and disintegration of the Somalian state in the early 1990s was projected in the US media as the product of inter-clan warfare or ‘tribalism’, an understanding in which classical anthropological theories about African social organisation were deeply implicated. This evolutionist understanding of political violence, which attributes inter-group conflict to pre- modern, pre-state loyalties, precludes a more complex historical analysis which would take into account multiple cleavages in Somali society such as those of class and race, as well as the struggle for control over the Somali state which has been the recipient of massive amounts of US aid (including arms) since the 1980s. Besteman’s discussion illustrates how anthropological ‘knowledge’, in this case the segmentary lineage system model, can be appropriated by other knowledge-producing agencies in the service of various ends. In this case, the media image of Somali tribesmen caught up in ancient clan rivalries and slaughtering each other with modem weapons served to justify US military intervention as a “late-20th-century civilizing mission” (1996a: 123).

Critique of constructivism

The Somali case illustrates a more widespread process in which the substantivist view of ethnicity, deriving from the older Durkheimian anthropology, has become ‘common-sense’ understanding through its dissemination in the media.

However, such conceptualisations of identity have also taken root within identity-based politics, especially diose of ‘indigenous peoples’. As a result, new work stemming from the ‘invention of tradition’ thesis has been opposed by ‘native’ groups for calling into question the authenticity of their ‘constructed’ cultural identity and traditions. While the constructivist argument is on the surface directed against the common and more pervasive tendency to reify communities and identities, its broader political aim is to deconstruct nationalist and sub-nationalist ideologies. It is for precisely this reason that the ‘invention of tradition’ thesis has come in for heavy criticism recently, both from within and outside of anthropology. This debate, much of which has taken place within the context of Pacific cultures, is perhaps the most interesting part of the literature and may be the most relevant to the Indian context.

A well-known example of such confrontation between the anthropologist’s analysis and the self-definition of an indigenous group is the attack launched by Hawaiian scholar Haunani- Kay Trask against anthropologists Roger Keesing and Jocelyn Linnekin. Trask criticised their ‘invented tradition’ arguments about Pacific islands cultures and identitarian movements (which suggested that local political leaders use reified and essentialised identities for their own ends) as a case of “hegemony recognizing and reinforcing hegemony” (1991:160, quoted in Briggs 1996:437). Linnekin’s work on the invention of Hawaiian tradition w'as seen as an “...attack on Hawaiian cultural continuity that was staged precisely when Native resistance was beginning to enjoy limited success on issues of land rights and sovereignty” (Briggs 1996:437). White anthropologists such as Keesing were accused of seeking “...to take away from us the power to define who and what we are, and how we should behave politically and culturally” (Trask 1991:162, quoted in Briggs 1996:437). The irony in such debates is that the anthropologist generally seeks to represent his or her position as more radical than that of the local activist, on the ground that he/she is helping to 'de-colonise' the discourses with which such groups construct their pasts. But the other side sees constructivist theories simply as a re-assertion of the representational authority of scholars vis-a-vis indigenous groups:

Having assumed the right to create cultural forms and then impose them on dominated communities, whites have now asserted their authority to declare such constructions to be 'factitious' ... and to withdraw them from circulation without feeling the need to consult the communities that may have adopted these 'fictions' as part of their lived experience (Briggs 1996:438).

Briggs argues that the 'invention of tradition' scholars, mostly non-native, "...claim discursive authority by virtue of the way that they construct their own distanced position with respect to tradition" (1996:460). This authority is buttressed by the class, race and otherwise privileged positions of the scholars with regard to hegemonic knowledge systems, which render "...null and void claims to knowledge based on direct participation in processes of cultural transmission" (1996:461). There is, in other words, not a free market in interpretations of the past but a "hierarchical structuring of representations of tradition" (1996:461).

This kind of conflict stems from one of the contemporary 'predicaments of culture' (Clifford 1988) that the more 'culture' comes into everyday and political discourse ('multiculturalism', 'Indian culture', 'youth culture'), the more compromised the concept becomes for the discipline which had made it its central trope. Friedman (1992) poses this problem somewhat differently: The construction of identities requires the production of in historical schcmes which valorise them: a meaningful universe of events and narratives is created by making history, or imprinting the present onto the past. But identities are also ‘invented' by anthropologists through their own academic practices as much as by those involved in identity politics. The difference is that anthropology (and all academic praxis) is situated within a modernist discourse, which is based on objectivism the idea that there is a ‘real’, narrative history to which the scientific subject has access (1992:849) while the discourses of actors are derived from ‘non-modernist’ identity spaces. The notion of ‘invented tradition’ falls squarely within this objectivist model. But such a position can only be held from a stance of authority, which by now is increasingly unavailable to the anthropologist (Clifford and Marcus 1990), or to the historian. The fact that both academics and actors are engaged in ‘inventing’ identities means that there will be an “...inevitable confrontation between Western intellectual practices of truth-value history and the practices of social groups or movements constructing themselves by making history” (Friedman 1992:837). In this conflict there can be no middle ground, because the strategy of truth value on which modernist anthropological understandings are based is as political a strategy as is the construction of identities within political movements (1992:852). All constructions of the past are socially motivated, including the kind ‘objective’ history produced by academics.

This debate raises a host of questions that cannot be discussed in detail here but which are critical to keep in mind while pursuing any academic research on identities or communities. In particular, it highlights the fact that local activists or political leaders, members of ‘communities’, and the scholars or journalists who are studying or writing about them (not to mention representatives of the state whose job it is to elicit information about them) construct their representations of those communities from different locations within a particular political- economic formation, and that such representations are bound to conflict with one another. Some anthropologists have tried to disown responsibility for how their work is interpreted and used beyond the academy by arguing that they have no control over what happens to what they write. But as Briggs (1996) argues, the problem here is not one of misrepresentation or misuse of academic scholarship; it is an outcome of the structural relation between the subject-positions of the scholar and his/her subjects and their consequent conflicting claims to authoritative knowledge about the communities in question. This is a problem that has no solution as long as the scholar adheres to an 'objective' or value-neutral stance in which he/she refuses to take a political position with regard to the nationalist other political objectives of the particular 'community' or movement: the scholar's analysis of that community's culture as either invented or authentic is bound to have political implications, one way or the other.

While it may seem that such debates are purely academic and have no resonance in the real world, in fact they have burst into the political arena in a number of cases precisely because questions of authenticity, tradition and culture are crucial to contemporary social movements, especially those of indigenous groups. Interpretations of tradition and the past by anthropologists and others have been widely deployed to fight cases in the defense of 'native' rights, such as for land rights. In this context, the interpretation of what is 'traditional' or 'customary' can be pivotal. For example, Trask (1991:166) suggests that the U.S. Navy used Linnekin's (1983) work on the invention of Hawaiian tradition to justify its bombing operations on Kaho'olawe Island, because the thesis allowed them to challenge native claims that the island is of great cultural significance (Briggs 1996:462). As a result of movements of indigenous peoples around the world, especially in North and South America, Australia, and the Pacific, anthropologists who study such groups are no longer able to maintain an objectivist or modernist stance with regard to cultural identity. In fact, increasingly they find themselves pulled into the identity politics of ‘their’ communities, and many are required to espouse a position of ‘anthropological advocacy’ as a pre-condition of the ethnographic relationship (Albert 1997:57-8). Activists and organisations working in the defense of indigenous people’s rights look to the anthropologist for knowledge that will further their own projects, which are usually based on a notion of cultural continuity. This kind of legitimation of such groups as political subjects in the international arena depends on their self-objectification as ‘indigenous’:

In this global ‘culturalist’ political environment, ethnographic discourse has become a strategic tool a symbolic mirror (in identity reconstruction) and a means of legitimating (by scholarly recognition) (Albert 1997:59).

In such situations, anthropologists have been forced to shift from their cherished method of ‘participant-observation’ to a stance of‘observant participation’ (1997:60).

Clearly, once all traditions are thought of as ‘invented’, it will become very difficult for subaltern groups, whose struggles now revolve largely around issues of identity and community rights, to fight for rights to land or livelihood on such grounds. Given the superior control over valued knowledge (embodied in written texts) by political and academic elites vis-à-vis oppressed groups, this devaluation of their claim to authentic knowledge based on oral traditions and other such sources is not likely to be in their interest. Thus, contrary to the constructivists’ argument that they contribute to the loosening of western hegemonic control over ‘native’ discourses, Briggs and other critics suggest that the invention literature in fact “...extends and legitimates scholarly control over the discourses of Others” (1996:463). This perspective, whose aim is to critique nationalist or sub-nationalist ideologies from a postmodern perspective, has its own politics, which must be understood within the wider context of the politics of subaltern groups.

The 'invention of tradition' thesis has also been criticised theoretically from within anthropology for its emphasis on the cultural processes of 'invention' without equal attention to the social and political context in which such inventions occur. As Rosenblatt (1997) puts it, while the past is read in terms of the present, the present also has a real historical connection with the past which places limits on how the past gets constructed:

> When people 'invent' traditions as interested political actors, they do so in ways that are meaningful to themselves and others, out of existing practices, and with purposes that were shaped by a particular historical experience (Rosenblatt 1997:291).

He argues that the concept of culture needs to be retained (rather than jettisoned, as advocated by the post-structuralists) in order to provide a link between the meaningful practices of human agents and the structured political and historical situations within which they carry out their projects and struggles (1997:292). As Friedman puts it, the problem with the "...invention thesis is that it is self-contradictory. If all culture is invention then there is nothing with which to compare a particular cultural product, no authentic foundation" (1992:856, note 5).

Indian social science and everyday discourses of society

Returning now to the problem of conceptualizing the concept of community in Indian sociology, what insights can we draw from the debates discussed above? To begin with, they suggest that researching and writing about communities and identity formation involve complex theoretical, epistemological and political questions that are not easily resolved. These issues stem mainly from the multiple ways in which the discourses and practices of the academy and those of the ‘real world’ interpenetrate with and inform one another, especially with regard to concepts of culture and tradition. These complex interconnections are seen in the common historical origin and shared vocabulary of these discourses; in the dissemination of academic knowledge through the projects of the state into society and people’s movements; in the conflicts and alliances that have arisen between anthropological and local constructions of identity; and in the fact that community identities are built on notions of cultural difference and social continuity that are also the staple of anthropological and sociological theories.

The constructivist argument about Indian society has identified colonial discourses and practices as the source of modern identities, but by and large it has not been extended up to the present to examine the ways in which such identities continue to be politically constructed, nor does it foreground the relationship between academic knowledge and the knowledge practices of the state or social movements. In many ways, the relationship between social science and the state that was established under colonialism has not changed after independence. Although the population is no longer counted by caste in the census, it is regularly enumerated according to every other conceivable social criterion. The relation of these modes of classification to political issues such as reservation or to the calculations of political parties at election time is well known. The ‘fixing’ of community identities by the state evokes a political response by people in which categories are accepted, negotiated, or rejected. In this process new identities may be born while others die out or merge. Studies demonstrating the historical fluidity or recent origin of apparently deep-seated social identities such as ‘Sikh’ or ‘Hindu’ are numerous, but what is not often noted in these studies is the influence of academic writing in political processes of identity formation.

Yet it is clear that sociological understandings of caste, religion, and kinship based social formations as the authentic units of Indian society are interdigitated with public and governmental discourses about the place of communities in Indian society. For example, the project of 'national integration' has been built upon the delineation of various tribes and castes in terms of certain cultural and/or physical attributes, and their display in books, museums, exhibitions, handicraft outlets, and on state ceremonial occasions. Annual national rituals include the performance of the 'folk' dances and songs of'tribal' and other ethnic groups. The idea that the nation is made up of diverse and discrete communities ('unity in diversity'), which has been tied into the ideological project of Indian nationalism right from its inception, has been fully naturalised. This has been accomplished in part through the state-directed educational system, which disseminates sociological' concepts such as caste, tribe, cultural diversity, and sanskritisation in history and social studies lessons. Adivasis and diverse regional groups get ethnicised in school textbooks, their cultural specificity designated by type of dress, food habits, and customs. As a result of such practices, substantivist, culturalist and essentialised conceptualisations of communities have become part of everyday understandings of the social world, at least among the educated middle classes. While the origins of such public conceptualisations of community are complex, it is not difficult to trace their circulation through official state documents and practices, education and the media.

The wide acceptance of such ideas is demonstrated in that fact that most incidents of inter-group violence are portrayed in the media as 'inter-community7 conflict of some sort, rather than as stemming from some other kind of struggle (e.g., over land rights). For example, the ongoing incidents of violence perpetrated by the private armies of the landowning class on poor peasant and landless labourer groups in Bihar are usually represented as inter-caste conflict, as have been similar incidents in Andhra Pradesh when members of 'dominant caste' landowning groups have attacked landless labourers belonging to the scheduled castes. It is not difficult to see how sociology and social anthropology are deeply implicated in all such constructions, directly and indirectly.

Such 'common-sense' concepts of community clearly derive from the older 'substantivist' approach within sociology, which is equivalent to the 'primordialist' thesis about ethnicity against which much of the constructivist literature is directed. While constructivism has made inroads within Indian academia, it has not yet provoked much public debate or opposition, as in the cases cited from the anthropological literature above. However, the constructivist position in the Indian case still needs to be examined closely to determine whether it provides a more satisfactory theoretical approach to these questions, especially since some of the writers in this camp have been contributing to debates on communalism, secularism and other such issues.

From substantivism to constructivism and back

As discussed above, Chakravarty (1995) puts forth the constructivist position regarding the hardening of community identities in India, but also argues that such modem identities co-exist with another kind of private and 'fuzzy' community. He then brings his discussion to bear on the debate on secularism by suggesting that as a result of colonial governing practices, cultural difference became central to Indian politics. This kind of cultural consciousness came into contradiction with the official state ideology of secularism put into place by Nehru, which ignored the "... actual culture of political practice in India where a religious idiom and imagination had always been very strongly present” (1995:3378; emphasis added). What we see here is the subterranean reproduction of the older sociological conceptualisation of community in Chakravarty’s analysis, a concept that flies in the face of his professed constructivist stance. He shifts easily from the Foucaultian position that the “...very structure of modem govemmentality carries with it the seeds of ethnic bloodbath” to another, almost contrary, argument about the “...everyday religiousness of Indian political culture” (1995:3378). Rather than following through with his insight about the hardening of ethnic or communal identities under colonialism as a result of political practices in order to understand present-day communalism, his desire to critique the Nehruvian ideology of secularism leads him to revert to the idea that Indian communities are at bottom religious, kinship-based, and rooted in cultural traditions in other words, not political (and certainly not economic).

Another version of this argument is provided by Partha Chatteijee, who in a recent paper (1998) has combined the substantivist notion of ‘community’ as based on particularistic ties of kinship (whether ‘actual’, extended or Active) with the constructivist position. Even while arguing against the ‘primordialist’ conception of community found in the writings of Ashis Nandy and other communitarians, Chatteijee appears to fall back into the same trap of understanding collective action (e.g., against the state, as in the case of Calcutta squatters described by him) in terms of the mobilisation of pre-state or non-modem social relations. According to him, community is opposed to capital (the culture/economy dichotomy); community is also apparently opposed to state (culture/politics; cf. Das 1995). ‘Fuzzy’ or otherwise, the conception of community remains a substantivist one: it is a non-political (and non-economic) entity which, although it can act politically, is formed through processes that cannot be understood within the same frame of reference as can other collectivities such as classes, political pressure groups, or social movements. Even while arguing that ‘communities’ today have become “...some of the most active agents of political practice” (1998:282), Chatteijee apparently does not envision the construction of these communities themselves as a political process. Thus, we see here a tendency for substantivist understandings of community to get reproduced even within apparently constructivist positions. While constructivism should represent an advance over the earlier substantivist or structuralist ideas about Indian communities, it appears that in much of this literature community continues to be regarded as the primary social and political category, or site of social action, within civil society. Regardless of their ‘invention’ by colonialism, caste, religious or ethnic identities are credited with a certain social reality and cohesiveness that is itself not interrogated by these writers. In addition, a major problem is that multiple identities or subject positions cannot easily be encompassed within a theory which posits communities as concrete moral and social entities, set off against the state.

There are other problems with the kind of constructivist argument we see in the Indian literature, which can be illustrated by returning to Dirks’ (1997) thesis. Although Dirks (1997:134) explicitly distances himself from Foucault and Said, his theory suffers from the same faults that have often been pointed out in the case of the latter two: the absence of a concept ofagency on the part of the colonised, an over-emphasis on knowledge systems and discourses of the state with less attention to the ways in which such discourses get played out in real social life, and lack of a concept of power tied to actual human agents (Ahmad 1991). While pointing correctly to the non-authentic nature of caste and communal identities, this kind of argument, while professing to be political, is in fact apolitical in that it fails locate ‘identities’ within the politically determined subject positions of those who profess those identities. While arguing, again correctly, against the notion of caste as the centre-piece of Indian social structure, Dirks in effect reproduces a culturalist understanding of politics and the state. In this view, the state becomes an actor which, engaged in a grand disciplinary project, produces new identities, creates forms of knowledge, and reinforces and totalises its power through its ordinary functions of counting, registering, classifying, and so on.

Conclusion: more questions

For historical reasons, including the particular history of sociological writing on Indian society, certain ideas about that society and its component communities have become fixed within a variety of discourses and have thereby come to form the basis of diverse social movements, political ideologies, and constructions of social phenomena. This is not to argue, following Dirks, that colonialism simply ‘invented’ caste which then took on a life of its own, i.e., that the categories made the people. Rather, it is to suggest that the concepts with which we (as academics and as people) think and understand the world have a history, as well as a present, which is closely bound up with multiple political processes, past and present, such as colonialism, nationalism, state-directed development, and social movements. By becoming more aware of the history and structure of these concepts we have at least a chance of moving outside of them and formulating a more satisfactory understanding of social and political processes. Till date, it appears that there are few intellectuals who are attempting to do this. Both communitarian and constructivist positions (in their various combinations and permutations, such as in the work of Veena Das, Ashis Nandy, Dipesh Chakrabarty, and Partha Chatterjee) tend to valorise a given understanding of community as an authentic social unit and political actor, and to reproduce the older dichotomy in which community (= the cultural = authentic identity) is set off against the state as well as the market. Thus, in Indian social science and history writing as well as in more public and popular understandings, the ‘community’ continuesto belong to the realm of "culture’, and therefore has roots in the ancient past; it represents a genuine social formation as well as a major source of identity, even if it has been shown to have been ‘invented’ at some point in the past. Conversely, political and economic practices or formations perceived as non-community (such as the state, the market, classes) are less authentic (because non-cultural and therefore non-Indian?), and therefore are to be bracketed outside of the discourse of community.

It now appears that neither of two conceptualisations of community discussed above the traditional substantivist one nor the more recent constructivist one are adequate to grapple with the complex problem of how to understand ethnicity, community or identity politics. While each approach has its own problems, they share a larger common one: both reflect the view from the outside, or the objectivist stance, in which the analyst presumes him/herself to be apart from the object (subject) of discussion. In doing so the anthropologist or historian also assumes that the terms and concepts through which she writes form a separate universe of discourse, or ‘meta-narrative’, which can be used to analyse the narratives of the informants. This assumption ignores the diverse ways in which the discourses of the academy are interconnected with those of society at large, in politics and the state, as discussed above. It also completely elides the issue of the politics of academic knowledge which has been so sharply debated within and with anthropology. In general, those who write about Indian history and society, whether constructivists or not, refuse to recognise the political import of their knowledge products, perhaps because they have not yet been challenged by people’s movements. They also largely fail to acknowledge their complicity with the various projects of the state. These are major issues that need to be raised and debated within Indian sociology if it is to reconstitute itself as a knowledge-producing system which is both politically committed and capable of yielding a better understanding of social and cultural processes in contemporary India.

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