Sociology: Concept and Themes

In this book, the contributors attempt to treat Sociology as a discipline with its own unique focus. Hence, the various concepts and themes treated in this book have been written to show that Sociology has gone beyond the study of 'marriage' and 'divorce'. It is a discipline, which is distinct from psychology, theology, social work or some other fields.

The contributions from various contributors have shown that in an attempt to study group life (society), sociology has been organized to include several sub-fields covering the possible area of human activities. The book is comprehensive in its scope and exhaustive in its contents. It deals with essential aspects of Sociology and motivates its readers, particularly students of Sociology who may want to understand the working of the society in which they live. The style of writing in this book is marked with simplicity and lucidity. All the contributors deal with their topics in a straightforward and forceful manner with carefully chosen vocabulary and appropriate language expressions, which straightway touch the hearts of the readers. The entire book is beautifully edited and adorned with relevant examples from Sociological tradition. There is no doubt that the readers will not only enjoy reading this book, they will also find it most inspiring and rewarding.

SOCIOLOGY
Concepts and Themes
An Introduction

Edited by:
B. Salawu Ph. D.

Sociology:
Concepts and Themes

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Bashiru Salawu (Ph.D)
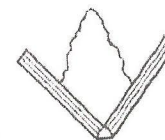
Dedication

This book is dedicated to the memories of S.Y Oganija and S.O. Olujobi, former colleagues who had submitted their articles for this book project before the cold hand of death snatched them away from us.

and

To my sweet Mother, Alhaja Asmau Ibitola Abike Salawu, who toiled to give me the benefit of having Western education.

List of Contributors

1. B. Salawu, Ph.D, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Sociology, formerly, the Head of Department of Sociology and currently the Coordinator, Professional Programmes Unit, University of Ilorin, Ilorin.
2. Late O.S. Olujobi and I.S. Mohammed were both lecturers in the Department of Sociology, University of Ilorin, Ilorin.
3. S. Metiboba, Ph.D, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Sociology, University of Ilorin, Illorin.
4. D.S. Adekeye, a Lecturer in the Department of Sociology, University of Ilorin, Ilorin.
5. Late S.T. Oganija was a lecturer in the Department of Sociology, University of Ilorin, Ilorin.
6. R.A. Olaoye, Ph.D, a Senior Lecturer and Head of History Department, University of Ilorin, Ilorin.
7. B. Taninu, a Lecturer in the Department of Sociology, University of Ilorin, Ilorin.
8. H.A. Abdulsalam, Ph.D a Lecturrer in the Faculty of Arts, University of Ilorin, Ilorin.
9. U.S. Usman, a Legal Practitioner and Director of Public Prosecution, Kwara State.
10. A.Y. Mohammed, a Lecturer in the Department of Sociology, University of Ilorin, Ilorin.
11. A.F. Adedayo, Ph.D, an Associate Professor, Department of Geography, University of Ilorin.
12. L.T. Ajibade, Ph.D, a Senior Lecturer and former Acting Head of Geography Department, University of Ilorin.

Contents

CHAPTER FIVE

The Basic Social Institutions

B. SALAWU AND D.S. ADEKEYE

Introduction

It has been observed that there are certain broad categories or patterns of things we find universally. They are patterns found in all types of society. For example, human beings everywhere marry and procreate. That is they organise themselves in family. Everywhere, human beings develop arrangements for producing, distributing, and consuming goods. In other words they have developed the institution of economy. Human beings everywhere have also developed some sort of system for distributing power. This is what we call government. In every human society, people have developed procedures for teaching children in their society. This is called education or socialization. Finally, human beings everywhere develop explanations for their place in the universe (religion).

All we are trying to say above is that throughout history, students of mankind have noted that some forms of behaviour seemed to be repetitive, organised and standardized in human societies including homogenous ones. Commonly, these uniformities are called institutions. Although the term institutions are variously defined, there seems to be considerable agreement among professional behavioural scientists about what they are. Accordingly, social institutions are purposive, regulatory, and consequently primary cultural configurations, formed unconsciously and/or deliberately, to satisfy individual wants and social needs bound up with the

efficient operation of any plurality of persons. Social institutions as defined above consist of codes, rules and ideologies.

There are other definitions given by a number of social scientists, which may enhance our understanding of the concept of institution. For example, Haralambo and Heald (2001) see social institutions as recognised and established usage governing certain relations of men. This means that social institution is a relation that is sanctioned by society. Radcliffe-Brown (1952) on the other hand, sees social institutions as standar-dised modes of behaviour so essential to social interaction that every society maintains its existence and continuity. From the discussion thus far, we can see that institutions are universal in principle and purpose. They only differ in quality and efficacy. One basic fact to note about social institutions is that they are related and interdependent in their functions. For example, in the process of socialisation for the development of personality, family, religion, education and polity all share the process interdependently.

The Origin of Social Institutions

In whatever way we may see social institutions, they originate from the fact that all societies have certain important central needs, problems, or functions that must be dealt with, and it is around these that institutions (known as systems of social relationships or ways of doing something) evolve. The central needs and concerns which societies face include reproduction of the species, socialisation of the young, a way of dealing with the unknown or uncertainty, distribution of goods and services and, a way of governing people. In this regard, different societies handle these concerns in different ways. But what is universal to all societies is that eventually an institution emerges which is made up of shared values and practices relating to the core concern. Hence, reproduction and maintenance of the species give rise to the institution of the family, while socialisation and training of the young to be

useful members of the society results into the institution of education. The institution of religion evolved because of the need to deal with the unknown. The economic institution arises because of the need to distribute goods and services, and finally governmental institutions arise from the necessity for rules and regulations governing man's behaviour. The above are therefore the five major, basic institutions which sociologists often treat in their discipline. They are: family, education, religion, economy and government. They are basic institutions because of the simple fact that all societies show evidence of these institutions in one form or the other. The list has not however exhausted all the types of institutions we have. When, for example, the needs of the society change, other newer institutions emerge to cope with the needs. A good example of this is the institution of science (which is the explanation of the unknown) which is surpassing the institution of religion (explanation of the unknown) in modern societies. For a better understanding of this concept of institution we shall discuss in the following sections each of the common or basic institutions and the functions they perform for the survival of the social system.

Kinship System

This is the first component of a social system that will be treated in this chapter. In this component we are going to discuss the following: kinship, descent and marriage. Later in the chapter we shall discuss how they help to maintain the social system of which they are a part. Usually and generally speaking, in sociology the term kinship has two aspects namely (1) the biological aspect, and (2) the socio-cultural aspect. From the biological point of view, kinship is a relationship, which is obtained through two major means like blood and descent. On the other hand, the socio-cultural aspect of kinship is man-made.

From the point of view of the first aspect (the biological aspect) two people are kinsmen if one is descended from the other. In other words, two people are kinsmen when the two are the descendant of a common ancestor or ancestress depending on which line of descent is given prominence in the society concerned. Also from the point of view of the socio-cultural aspect, the society may approve that such and such persons are kinsmen. This is to say that kinship system in a society may be a function of the socio-cultural practice in the society. This means that biological relations through descent do not exhaust the whole of kinship. Therefore all relations that are created through marriage are kinship. This is why one's brothers-in-law, mothers-in-law, and sisters-in-law are one's kinsmen. As pointed out earlier, society may accord the status of kinsman. This explains why adopted children among the Yako of South-east of Nigeria are regarded as kinsmen. From our discussion so far we can conclude that kinship involves the relationships of blood, affinity and adoption.

There are different social relationships, which are developed, in the social system through kinship. Such relations are (1) parallel cousins; (2) siblings; and (3) uterine. Parallel cousins by definition are children of two siblings of the same sex. In other words they are children of two brothers or of two sisters. The second type of social relations developed through kinship is the sibling. There are different types of sibling relations. For example, there is the full-siblings who are persons of either sex having the same father and the same mother. There is also the half-sibling relation in which case it refers to persons who are the children of the same father and different mothers. Such relations are called paternal half-siblings in sociology. There is another type of half-siblings, which involves person's mother. Such persons are called maternal half-siblings. Finally uterine relationships constitute a third major type which are developed in the social system

through kinship. By definition, uterine relationships are kin in which descent is reckoned through females.

Descent

This is yet another concept in sociology, which is closely related to the concept of kinship system. According to P.C. Lloyd, a descent group is a body of persons who trace descent in male or female or both lines from a named ancestor. This implies therefore, that a descent is a socially recognised link between a person and his forebears or ancestors. Descent group is thus a corporate kin group in which descent is the important criterion for membership.

Like the kinship, there are different social relationships, which are developed, in the social system through descent. Such social relations include (1) the cognatic or bilateral relations; (2) unilineal relations; (3) double unilineal; and (4) ambilateral relations. By definition, cognatic descent is a relation traced through both parents. Unilineal is a relation traced either through the father or mother's lineage. Hence it can be either parilineal (agnatic) or matrilineal groups. Another type of relation is what we call double unilineal descent in sociology. In this type, the ego is a member of a patrilineage in certain social contexts and a member of a matrilineage in another one. The classic example is the Yako society of Nigeria. Finally we have the ambilateral relation. In this case the ego may filiate into either of his parent's lineage.

Functions of Kinship and Descent Systems

Generally it is important to mention again that like any other component we are going to discuss in this chapter, kinship and descent perform certain functions for the maintenance of the social system. Any social system, we are told, is often faced with the problems centering on sexual behaviour, production and socialisation of the young ones. The kinship and descent structures constitute a set of mechanisms that

have been developed to solve these problems. Therefore, a meaningful discussion of the functions of these two structural components (kinship and descent) should center on how the structures help to solve the system's problems.

First and foremost, both kinship and descent grouping of the social system provide a way of transmitting status and property from one generation to the next. Common to all societies is the fact that when a person dies he leaves some things behind. These things may be status, such as headship of a family or a local group, or movable or immovable property like land, livestock or even money. It is a common practice that after his death these things must pass to someone else. The fact that this must happen creates the problem of inheritance for the social system, which must be solved if the system must survive as an ongoing concern. As mentioned earlier, the social structure that has been developed to solve this problem is the kinship and descent arrangement in each society. Based on the social structure of kinship and descent, every society has established certain rules for the transmission of property and status. In some societies for instance, it is possible and of course, the commonest practice to inherit position or goods from father's side of the family and from the mother's side. This means that in such societies, the cognatic or bilateral type of social relation is dominant. Hence, property or position transmission takes place along this line.

It is however important to know that it is more usual for one line either patrilineal or matrilineal to be used for the transmission of particular status or types of property. This type of practice is somewhat common in societies where double-unilineal type of relation predominates. It is also important to note that most societies throughout the world have adopted a predominantly partrilineal mode of inheritance – unilineal relation, while in some societies, status and property are transmitted through women – matrilineal

relation. Another fact that is worthy of note is that even where one line or the other is of major importance for the transmission of status, rights or property, some significance is almost invariably attached also to the submerged line. For example, in Ashante of Ghana, which is a strongly matrilineal society, it is believed that a spiritual principle called *ntoro* is transmitted patrilineally. Equally, in many patrilineal societies, it is believed that witchcraft is inherited in the female line. A good illustration of this is the Yoruba society of Nigeria where witchcrafting is believed to be the occupation of women and is therefore transmitted from them to another female child.

As for the status allocation problem facing any social system, kinship and descent structures have also been used to meet the system's problem. The solution adopted by the great majority of human societies to deal with the problem relating to the determination of status has been one by which a child derives certain rights and duties through the father. There are other societies that meet this problem of allocation through the mother. Where the rights and duties derived through the father preponderate in social importance over those derived through the mother, we have what is called a patrilineal system. Inversely, a matrilineal system is one in which the rights and duties derived through the mother dominate those derived through the father. As we have in the case of inheritance, there are some societies in which there is fairly even balance between the elements of status derived through father and mother. For example among the *Ovatterero* of South-West Africa, a child through his mother derives membership in an *eanda* (a matrilineal clan), and through his father, the child becomes a member of an *oruzo* (a patrilineal clan).

A second major function of the institution of kinship and descent is that in some societies, it serves to establish and maintain effective social groups. For example, in the simpler

cultures, the individuals live in conditions full of uncertainty and insecurity. In such conditions therefore, it is essential for everyone to be a member of a cooperating closely-knit group of people. Kinship and descent structures have been so developed to solve these problems of uncertainty and insecurity. The individual in simpler societies thus depends upon the aid and support of others in such vital activities such as hunting, agriculture and herding or war.

Marriage Institution

Marriage, which is also a universal human institution, is not an easy term to define. There are several reasons why there is no definitive definition for this concept. The most instructive of these reasons, however, is that there is a great diversity in the systems of marriage throughout the world. But for the simple reason of clarity and simplicity, the concept of marriage can be defined as a union between a man and a woman such that the children born to the woman are the recognised legitimate offsprings of both partners. This definition implies that marriage is a union of one man with one woman in accordance with the traditions and customs of a society. It is these traditions and customs that give marriage its legal foundation.

Going by the discussion above, it can be pointed out here that there is no general definition of marriage as there is none that covers all of the kinds of institutionalised interpersonal relationship which fall under the concept called marriage. Several cross-cultural studies have shown that it is sometimes hard to actually decide whether a particular kind of union in a particular society can usefully be called marriage. The interpretation of this is that what is called marriage is culture relative. Therefore, to have an in-depth understanding of the concept marriage, we need to discuss it using a number of parameters namely the form it takes in different societies and the incest taboo.

Generally, there are two types or forms of marriage namely monogamy and polygamy or plural marriage. Monogamy is a type of marriage in which a man is only entitled to one woman at a time. The general pattern here is that in this type of marriage a man is only entitled to another wife in case of divorce or death of the first wife. Monogamous marriage is found almost everywhere in the world particularly in the developed societies like Britain and America. Outside these places, some societies that experienced colonial rule have also institutionalised this form of marriage together with a form of marriage known as polygamy. That is, the two forms coexist. In Africa, the introduction of Christianity and British law has encouraged the practice of this type of marriage. On the whole, monogamy is a type of marriage, which forms the basis of nuclear family, which is a social unit of one man, one wife and their children.

Polygamy, on the other hand, is a form of marriage where it is possible to contract a union with more than one partner at a time. Sociologically and due to cultural diversities, there are two types of polygamy namely *polygyny* and *polyandry*. The former is a form of marriage in which a man marries more than one wife. This is the most common form of marriage in most African societies. The latter which is polyandry and usually known as plural husbands is a form of marriage in which one woman is married to several men. In polyandry, brothers can be jointly married to a single wife. When it happens this way, it is called the adelphic polyandry. The adelphic polyandry is found among the Tibet people. In this type of marriage, the wedding takes place when the person regarded as the eldest brother has attained the appropriate age of puberty. All the husbands to this woman live in one house with the wife (*the woman in marriage*). The offspring resulting from the marriage is seen as the child of all the husbands. However, on formal occasion, it is the eldest

brother among the lots who plays the role of father (Fox, 1967).

Sociologically, the type of marriage described above has a number of advantages. First, such marriage makes unnecessary the division of property between the families of a set of brothers because they (brothers) are married to the same woman. Secondly, it has been observed that when a husband is away from home for business, there is someone in charge of his wife.

Polyandry has also taken another form among some of the non-Islamic peoples of northern Nigeria. In this type of marriage, C.K. Meek observed that the husbands and the wife do not live together in one household as it happens among the Tibet people. Meek also observed that the men among the *Kadara* and *Kagoro* people are not simultaneously married to the woman. Instead, the wife makes a second formal marriage and leaves her first husband's home. This should not be seen as a case of divorce as the first marriage is still valid.

Among the *Kadara* people for example, girls were usually betrothed as infants. This was usually done through presentation of marriage gifts. Such gifts take two forms namely, farm labour and presentation of large pots of beer. The man who presents the gift would be considered as the first husband of the girl. The second husband is chosen later in life. This is done when a new man approaches her father and the father gives his consent. The girl would then run away to her lover's village. The usual practice is that in the lover's village, the girl would stay with the kinsmen of her father until the marriage feast took place. When this marriage feast had been completed the first husband would be informed. As mentioned earlier, this would not translate into dissolution of the first marriage.

Functions of Marriage Institution

On the importance of marriage, sociologists have advanced many reasons for why marriage is an important institution in

any society (Stephens, 1963). For instance, it is through marriage men and women's lust for sexual competition and interest is regulated. Again, marriage, as a social institution, confers rights on a man over the economic and domestic services of a woman. In the African societies this latter reason is especially true. Marriage has also been seen as a social mechanism, which gives a man the exclusive right to his wife's sexual favours. Lastly but not the least, marriage helps to build up unity among groups in the marriage.

Family Institution

In the proceeding section in this chapter, we have discussed three of the basic structural components of the social system (i.e. kinship, descent and marriage). In this section attention is focused on the institution of family in the social system. The word family cannot be given a single definition, as this is an institution, which varies from society to society (Zeiditch, 1964). Therefore, it is only in the broadest sense can one give a single meaning to the term family that will be applicable to the family systems the world over.

In common American usage, a family is the group, which lives in a house under a single head or couple. It is also a group of immediate kinsmen especially of parents and children whether living together or not. Above all, a family is seen as the descendants of a common forbear whether immediate or remote (Fox, 1967). However, a more universal definition regards family as group membership, which depends upon real or assumed biological relationships. As it is frequently said, the family (in whatever way we define it) is the basic social unit. In fact there are a lot of evidences to show the priority of family as the fundamental social structure or group. These evidences include, one, the immediacy of our involvement in family life; two, the sexual and other satisfaction it provides, and three, its functions with respect to childbearing and childcare. This then implies that there is no individual without a family and therefore it is a universal phenomenon (Murdock, 1949).

Despite its almost universal presence in human society, the form and functions of the family vary so widely. In some societies, each individual life is bound up almost totally within the family. In others, many roles and relations are relatively independent of it. In communal society, for instance, the family or larger kinship group is typically the most significant social unit to which men belong. The allocation of political power is often linked with family institution (Goody, 1976). Similarly, economic activities are frequently organized along family or kinship lines. This is to say that in traditional societies, economic obligations have been part of the family structure. This explains why in the primitive and peasant societies it is often difficult to distinguish economic, political and religious institutions and roles from those of family and even marriage.

From the foregoing, family can be seen as distinct from the more embracing kinship structure. It consists of a group made up of adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, owned or adopted, of the sexually cohabiting adults. Usually, the family shares a common residence and its members cooperate in meeting their economic needs.

Types of Family

As noted by Murdock (1945), virtually all societies recognise families, yet families are subject to significant cross-cultural variation. Generally speaking, sociologists have distinguished three types of family. These are (1) the nuclear or elementary family, (2) the extended family; and (3) the compound family. The nuclear or elementary family consists of husband (father), wife (mother) and children. The children may be biological offspring of the couple or adopted members of the family. Thus, the nuclear family is a social unit composed of one or

more commonly, two parents and children. It is typical of this type of family to be based on marriage and is also often called the conjugal family. The extended family on the other hand is made up of more than one nuclear unit and extends across more than two generations. An example of an extended family is the three-generation family that includes parents, their married and unmarried children, children-in-law and grandchildren. In other words, an extended family is a social unit, which includes parents, children, and other kin (Scheider, 1961). Another name for this kind of social unit is what is called the consanguine family, which means that it is a social unit based on blood ties. This type of family is typical of many pre-industrial societies and commonly found in African societies. The third type of family mentioned earlier is the one some sociologists refer to as compound family. It is a social unit, which rests upon polygamous marriage (Zeiditch, 1964). In polygyny, meaning one man and several wives, the most frequently found and generally the most popular form of family unit is compound family. In such a situation the man plays the role of husband and father in several nuclear families.

Functions of the Family

According to the structural-functional analysts, the family performs several of any society's basic tasks. This tells us why the family is oftentimes described as 'the backbone of society'. The functions usually performed by the family institution include the following:

Socialization

As mentioned somewhere in this book, the family is the first agent in the socialization process, which a child comes in contact with. It is believed to exert more influence than peer groups, schools, churches or mosques, and the mass media. It is important to note that the personalities of each new

generation take shape within the family. This presupposes that the adults in each society guide the children in such a way that they become well-integrated and of course useful members of the society.

Regulations of Sexual Activity

There is no society without one form of sexual restriction or the other. In fact, every human society restricts sexual activity for the simple fact that human reproduction is central to kinship organization and property rights. The regulation of incest taboo is a cultural norm forbidding sexual relations or marriage between certain kin. Although the incest taboo is a universal practice, the kin who are regulated this way vary from one culture to another.

Political Institution

Both politics and law are concerned with social control in the social system. This means that to have an orderly system of social relations people have to be subjected to some degree of social control. That is, their activities must be regulated and put under check as the need arises. Historically therefore, all societies have had ways and means of governing their peoples. This presupposes that the way and manner by which people are governed varies widely, depending on their value systems and population. But before we go into detail in this section we must know what politics is all about.

When we think of politics or political organisation we are thinking in particular of the maintenance of ordered relations between different categories and groups of people in a society. The definition of politics thus given presupposes that politics is found in all human societies regardless of their degree of complexity.

Generally speaking, there are two types of political organisations, which are often used by societies to maintain orderly relationship among people. These two types are (1)

the centralised political system, and (2) the non-centralised political system. In their book, M. Fortes and E E. Evans Prichard (African Political System) distinguished those societies which have special political positions (offices) from those societies which do not have such positions. The former groups are referred to as centralised societies, while the latter groups are called non-centralised societies. In order to understand properly these broad types of political organisation we shall treat them one after the other.

First and foremost are the non-centralised societies, which are sometimes referred to as the stateless societies. They have the following characteristics. One, they do not have political positions or offices. Rather they use positions that have other non-political functions for political purposes. Two, they lack centralised authority which means that there is no king from whom authority of the state emanates. Finally, they also lack constituted judicial institution. The political structures of the *Tiv, Yako, Tallensi, Lagoli* and *Nuer* meet the above mentioned criteria of non-centralised or stateless societies. It is important to note here that all non-centralised societies are not the same. This means that the principle of political organisation adapted in non-centralised societies varies from society to society. Thus there is no uniformity of political organisation even among the non-centralised societies.

Secondly, we have the centralized political institution in which there are political office holders with centralized authority. Above of all, in such political system there is usually a constituted judicial institution. The political system found among the *Yoruba* of Southwest of Nigeria and that of the *Hausa* people of Northern Nigeria provides good examples of centralized political system.

Religious Institution

The first problem of the sociology of religion is that of terminology. The question here is how can one defines

religion and the sociology, which it may have motivated? One important thing to note here is that whenever we talk about religion people often think that we only mean Christianity or Islam. Thus, efforts to define religion suffer not only from this type of parochialism but also from the complexity of religion, which may include theology (a body of formal doctrine), ritual, (a type of personal experience), and a set of moral values.

In recent British Anthropology, there are two principal types of working definitions of religion. The first definition treats the term religion as lending itself with difficulty to further definition and as covering an area of human activity which lacks sharply delineated boundaries. This definition implies that one has to accept as religion any phenomenon which a person or group of persons decide to treat as religion. For example, if you take up a stone or any object for that matter and treat it as religion, it would be accepted as such. The second definition in British Anthropology treats the term as referring to commerce with a specific class of objects. This definition implies that religion is the belief in sprits or religion is the belief in the supernatural.

From our discussion so far, we can see that whichever way we try to define the concept of religion, we are bound to encounter problem of a precise definition. As sociologists therefore, we have no choice but to feel our way towards the meaning of the concept religion should have in any given circumstance. The implication of this is that in giving a definition of this concept, we must not risk omitting anything that might be relevant. For our own purpose here, therefore, we can use the working definition of the term religion given by Emile Durkheim (1912). According to Emile Durkheim, religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things. According to the proponent of this definition, sacred means things that are set apart and forbidden.

The definition of religion as given by Emile Durkheim implies that all human actions fall into place on a continuous scale. At one extreme of the scale we have actions which are entirely profane. This area of human action pertains to the realm of everyday utilitarian activities. They constitute the ordinary things, which we can approach or touch or use the way we want. At the other extreme we have actions which are entirely sacred. According to Durkheim, these are strictly aesthetic. They are areas which pertain to the transcendental, the extraordinary. It must be noted here that Durkheim looked upon activities, which would commonly be called religions as falling out into the sacred, aesthetic, technically non-functional end of the scale.

On the emergence of religion, Durkheim argued that religious phenomena emerge in a society when a separation is made between the sphere of the profane and the sacred. Thus, an object is intrinsically neither sacred nor profane. In fact, it becomes one or the other if man makes it so. Wine for instance has these two properties – profane and sacred. When it is taken as a beverage it is a profane. But the same wine when it is provided at mass has sacred ritual significance. Another example is a public hall. When such hall is used on an ordinary day for a wedding it assumes the attribute of profane. But when the same hall is used on Friday or Sunday for religious service, it becomes a sacred thing.

Social Functions of Religion

As religion becomes adapted to the existing social order, it serves some important social functions. First and foremost, it provides answers for the uncertainties inherent in human life. Secondly, religion as a social institution frequently encourages acceptance of prevailing norms and established social relationships. In this case religion may contribute to the persistence of existing institutions and social relationships by the attitude toward life that it enjoins. The ritual that is part of

religion not only reaffirms the beliefs people share, but also draws believers together into a moral community.

A third function of religion is that the consensus on religious doctrine and uniformity of religious practice contribute to the solidarity of the society. On the other hand however, religious differences may lead to hostility and even open conflict as it always happens in many societies in Nigeria.

Economic Institution

Generally speaking, economics is one of the parts that make up social sciences. Others, being anthropology, political science, psychology and sociology. Basically, economics deals with the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services in the society. In the advanced cultures or societies, economics is the preserve of specialist scholars called economists. The scholars in this area of specialization often engage themselves in the study of economic institutions of the Western societies. These scholars emphasise the complex monetary systems of the Western societies and their wide-range organization of production and distribution.

The Western economists propounded theories to explain the economic behaviours of these complex societies. Consequently, the small-scale societies thus remained uncovered by the theories propounded by the aforementioned specialist scholars. Therefore, our concern with the economic institution as sociologists is on the societal aspect within which economic activities take place. For instance, the problems of scarcity and choice which are basic in economics are influenced by the following factors namely, the social organization, values and the general attitudes.

The organization of economic life and the items of economic activities differ from society to society. There are a number of factors, which determine the nature of economic institution in human societies. The first among these factors is the level and kinds of technology. Using this criterion, it is

possible to see that some economic systems are based on the hoe and cutlass or bows and arrow. Such societies are different from those that are organised around the technologies of plough, machines and fertilizers. The other determining factors are the structure of the unit of production and the differentiation of economic roles. The implication of this is that in some societies the structure and role differentiation is simple while in others they are complex.

Further to the above, the system of exchange is yet another factor that determines the nature of economic activities in all human societies. In this respect, the medium of exchange varies from one society to another. It should also be understood that the social relation in the exchange process differs from one society to the other. For instance, gift giving and reciprocity and redistribution are important exchange activities particularly in the traditional societies.

Based on the discussion above we can infer that the economic institution of every society concerns itself with the following problems: the problems of production, distribution and consumption. We have to understand that the ways these problems are solved differ from one society to another.

Production

A first and most essential requirement for any human community is to feed itself. In some of the very simple societies, this is everybody's main preoccupation from childhood to death. Everything we eat comes either directly or indirectly from the earth. Apart from food, shelter and clothing, essential tools are also basic to live and they. are produced from our environment. There are many ways by which these necessities have been chiefly secured by different human communities. These are, the food gatherers (hunters, collectors and fishermen), the pastoralists, the agriculturists, and industrial organisation.

As mentioned above, the food gatherers are the hunters and collectors, and sometimes they are fishermen. These people obtain their livelihood by gathering wild fruits, roots etc, and by hunting and trapping. They neither farm nor keep animals. Though, this economic system represents a very simple economic type, it has a number of implications. First, the people who survive on this kind of economic system have to migrate from one place to another because of the exhaustibility of available food in an area. Secondly, because they have to migrate very frequently their accommodation is very temporary in nature. Thirdly, they possess few household materials such as the cooking materials, hunting tools and gadgets. Just because of the temporary nature of their shelter, they have to carry about these household materials as they move. Fourthly, because they rely on the gift of nature, which is exhaustible after a while, the number of people that can live in one place at a time is limited. In most cases, they are kinsmen, grandparents, parents and children with their close kin. Finally, there is little or no politics. But the oldest man heads the group organisation. He exercises authority over others and his men rely on him on matters of wisdom.

Some examples of food gatherers are the *Semang* of Malayan Forests, the *Khoi* Africans of the Kalahari Desert, the *Kwakintl* of British Columbia, the *Pygmies* of the Congo and Ituri Forests, and the Australian Aborigines. It must be noted here that these people organise themselves in set patterns and they do not just roam aimlessly in the forests. This implies that there is order in the manner and extent of exploitation of forest resources. They may travel say three to six miles in a day but within a specific territory.

Distribution and Consumption

As pointed out earlier in this chapter, every economic institution must solve the problem of distribution. When each individual or family unit is engaged in the same type of

production as all others, the vast bulk of all production is distributed or consumed by either the individual or within the family. The implication of this is that in this type of production organisation, the family will have few resources that might be traded for additional food should it have insufficient supplies of food. Under this circumstance, the common pattern is one of sharing and reciprocity. Here, the family that has run short of supplies accepts gifts from someone else. This type of distribution characterises food-gathering societies especially the hunters. For example, a successful hunter cannot begin to consume his production. Consequently, he makes arrangements for distributing the meat resulting from the successful hunt. This arrangement can be very elaborate in nature. On a future hunt when the hunter is unsuccessful, he is likely to receive meat from someone else's kill. This type of reciprocative distribution arrangement probably occurs in all societies.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the concept institution has been carefully defined taking into cognizance especially its universal characteristics. Even though the term institution like many sociological concepts lacks uniformity in its definition, yet amongst professional behavioural scientists, there is a consensus of opinion to the effect that social institutions are related and interdependent in their functions.

This chapter has painstakingly but carefully delved into the origins of social institution, with a view of bringing into a sharper focus the various known social institutions in human society and the functions they perform. The conclusion is that each social institution meets the specific need of the society for which it is intended.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

Man and Culture

A.Y. MUHAMMED AND D.S. ADEKEYE

Introduction

If there is any key to sociological understanding, it is the idea that the personal traits, beliefs, and values that govern behaviour are products of an interaction between individuals and their social environment. All human beings receive a double inheritance at birth: a biological one and a social one. This social legacy is part of what we call culture. Culture involves all that surround a person: beliefs, rules for behaviour, ideas of right and wrong, and material objects.

Although a single symbol may tell much about a culture, it does not make a culture. Cultures, as we said, are complex wholes that include knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of the society. Culture consists of a combination of factors that, taken together, tend to form coherent patterns. Sociologists and anthropologists who go into "the field" must put together the various pieces. Often they must begin by trying to "decode" the symbolic characteristics, to figure out their meaning in the particular setting.

However different one culture may be from another, they all share one fundamental feature: they are transmitted from the old to the young through system of symbols (things that stand for other things). The symbols may be sounds, marks on a page, physical gestures, or objects created to embody a symbolic meaning. In this chapter, attempt is made to discuss

in detail the meaning of culture and some related concepts to it.

Culture Defined

The concept 'culture' is used in different ways. When the word is used by a social scientist, namely, a sociologist or an anthropologist it has a special meaning. He could speak of culture as the way of life of a particular society. Culture, which is a sociological term, was originally developed to be used as a tool to describe the differences and similarities between groups of people. The specific and general meanings of culture could be given as follows. Culture refers to a configuration of learned and shared patterns of behaviour and of understanding concerning the meaning and value of things, ideas, emotions, and actions. This configuration of patterns and understanding arises out of language communication within a social group and helps an individual to adapt to his physical environment, his biological nature, and his group life (Odetola and Ademola 1985).

On the other hand, when we speak of culture in general, the word is referring to the learned portion of human behaviour, the ways of things, feeling, and doing things that man in his own capacity has developed as part of his environment. Yet another meaning of culture often refers to the aspect of human behaviour in terms of his taste, refinement and interest in music and arts. In this context, many people have the opinion that culture means civilization, development or improvement acquired through learning and education. Hence, it is common to hear one referring to another person in a derogatory sense, as uncultured or, in a favourable way, as a person who is highly cultured. This indicates that every society possesses some elements of culture irrespective of the socio-economic development of the society. Culture is therefore universal but may differ from one society to another.

From the discussion above, culture can be defined as the beliefs, values, behaviour, and material objects shared by a particular people. But culture involves more than simply adding up all the ways people act and think, and assessing the sum of their possessions (Soyinka, 1991). Culture welds past and present, synthesizing achievement and aspiration. In short, culture is a complete societal heritage.

The terms, culture and society are sometimes used interchangeably, but their precise meanings are different. Culture refers to a shared way of life. Society, is the organized interaction among people within a geographical or political boundary, which is guided by culture. Neither society nor culture could exist without the other.

In everyday life, the way we dress, when and what we eat, where we work, and how we spend our free time are all grounded in culture. Our culture leads us to sleep in houses of wood and brick, while people of other cultures live in huts fashioned from brush and igloos. Culture frames the meanings we attach to our lives, indicating standards of success, beauty and goodness, as well as reverence for a divine power, the forces of nature or long dead ancestors. Sociologists, then, use the concept of culture more broadly than others do. In everyday conversation, culture usually refers to sophisticated art items such as classical literature, music, dance, and painting. As used here, however, the term refers to everything that is part of a people's way of life.

No cultural element is inherently "natural" to humanity, although most people around the world view their particular way of life that way. What sets humans apart from other species is the culture capacity, and although culture is transmitted from generation to generation, specific elements of culture are all subject to change.

All living species from ants to antelopes behave in uniform ways. To a world traveler, the enormous diversity of human life stands out in contrast to the behaviour of say, cats, which

is the same everywhere. Most living creatures respond to biological forces we call instincts, strategies for their survival that change only over a long period of time. A few animals notably chimpanzees and related primates have the capacity for basic elements of culture. Researchers have noted that these primates use tools and teach simple skills to their offsprings. But the creative power of humans far exceeds that of any other form of life, so that only human beings rely on culture rather than instinct to ensure the survival of their kind (Harris, 1987).

The Components of Culture

Although people around the world express their humanity differently, all cultures have at least three common components. These are symbols, language, values, and norms. Generally speaking sociologists distinguish between non-material culture (the intangible creations of human society), and material culture (the tangible products of human society).

Symbols

The human world is grounded not in objects and action, but in meaning. In short, the surrounding environment is symbolic. The symbol is anything that carries a particular meaning recognized by members of a culture. A whistle, a wall of graffiti, a flashing red light, and a fist raised in the air all serve as symbols. We can see the human capacity to create and manipulate symbols in the simple act of winking the eye. In some settings this action conveys interest, in others, understanding, in still others, insult.

Symbols are the basis of culture and the foundation of everyday reality. Generally, we become so fluent in the language of our culture's symbols that we take them for granted. Often, however, we sense their importance when symbols are used in an unconventional way, say, if an American flag is burned in a political demonstration. We also

recognize the power of symbols when we enter a society with an unfamiliar culture. Culture shock stems from an inability to attach meaning to our surroundings. For example, a *Yoruba* man in Nigeria entering an *Igbo* society for the first time may experience this kind of culture shock.

Language

Language is the key to entering the world of culture. It is a system of symbols that allows members to communicate with one another. All cultures have a spoken language, although, some including the *Yanomamo* have no system of writing. Written symbols themselves are culturally variable, with societies in the Western world writing left to right, those in North Africa and Western Asia writing to left, and people in Eastern Asia writing from top to bottom. For all people throughout the world, cultural heritage is rooted in language. Thus, language is the most important means of cultural transmission, the process by which one generation passes culture to the next. Just as our bodies contain the genes of our ancestors, so our everyday lives are grounded in the symbolic system of those who came before us. Through the unique power of language, we gain access to centuries of accumulated wisdom. The proverbs in many Nigerian societies are good examples to illustrate the point above.

For most of human history, people have transmitted culture through speech, which is often termed the oral cultural tradition. Not until five thousand years ago did humanity devise writing, and even then only a few people learned to read and write. Language skills not only put us in touch with the past they also free the human imagination. By connecting symbols in new ways, we can conceive of life other than as it is. Language – both spoken and written – distinguishes human beings as creatures aware of our limitations and ultimate mortality. Yet able to dream and hope for a future better than the present.

Values

What accounts for the popularity in the United States of film characters like James Bond, Dirty Harry, Rambo, and Ihelma and Louise? Each is ruggedly individualistic, suspicious of the system and relies primarily on personal skill and effort. Together, they suggest that Americans celebrate an ideal of sturdy individualism, especially for men. Sociologists call such patterns values, standards by which members of a culture distinguish the desirable from the undesirable, what is good from what is bad, and nice from the ugly. Values are judgements, from the standpoint of the culture of what ought to be. People express these broad principles in most aspect of their way of life.

Cultural values shape our personalities. We learn from families, schools, and religious organizations how to think and act according to approved principles, what personal goals are worthy, and how to properly relate to our fellow human beings. In a society as large and diverse as the United States of America, everyone shares few cultural values. Over the centuries, people throughout the world have entered the United States, producing music of cultural values. This contrasts with the greater cultural homogeneity of historically isolated societies such as Japan. Even so, the American way of life is guided by a number of values that most people recognize and that tend to persist over time.

Cultural Patterns

The term pattern refers to a cluster of related ways of behaving found in a given culture. It is evident however, that those cultural patterns are not of the same sort. A culture includes two major types of pattern: namely, the ideal patterns and behavioural (actual) patterns. Ideal patterns describe what people of a society would do or say in a defined situation if they conformed completely to the ideals accepted in the culture. They represent the imperative (must) and obligation

(should) of a given society. Behavioural patterns on the other hand, are derived from observations of how people actually behave in particular situations (Kluckhohn, 1941). The differences between ideal and behavioural patterns are found in every society. We can illustrate this with two examples from Nigerian society: marriage under the marriage act and virginity.

In Nigeria a man who goes through a form of marriage under the marriage act with two different persons on two different occasions, with the first wife still living and not being divorced from him, commits the offence of bigamy – the punishment is seven years imprisonment. Marriage under this act is monogamous: one man, one wife. On the other hand a marriage under customary law is potentially polygamous, in which you can marry as many wives as you can afford. The elite or the Western – oriented members of society often go for marriage under the act. Actual behaviour does not conform to this idea of one man, one wife.

In the second example, a girl is expected to be a virgin until she is married, and the marriage is consummated. In the past the couple were expected to show evidence of the virginity: a piece of white cloth was provided for the couple to use as a bed-sheet. If the sheet was stained with blood (during consummation) it was assumed that the bride was a virgin. The bridegroom would show the blood stained bed sheet to the anxiously waiting relatives – the bride and her relatives then received warm greetings and praises from the groom's family, the former being presented with more gifts or being able to make further demands. The bride, apart from receiving more presents, was accorded respect and dignified treatment, she had brought an important resource to the marriage and her position or influence was well established. A bride who was not a virgin brought disgrace and contempt on herself and her people and her position was insecure.

In some instances, the ideal behavioural patterns may define several acceptable means of meeting a given situation. Kluckhorn (1941) has identified five categories of ideal pattern namely:

Compulsory

The culture provides one acceptable pattern, although there may be a number of different traditional solutions approved for meeting certain situations. In the Nigeria culture, the following ideal patterns prevail with respect to sex: polygyny, monogamy and levirate.

Preferred

Several ways of behaving are acceptable but one is more highly valued than the rest. In the example just given, on the whole, it is evident that polygyny is a preferred ideal pattern.

Alternative

Several ways of behaving are acceptable and all have equal value. Marriage, as previously indicated, may be contracted under the customary law, or under the act.

Typical

Where one ideal pattern is simply the ideal most frequently expressed without any implication that it is singled out as the object of idealized preference. Monogamy is a typical ideal pattern in Nigerian society.

Restricted

This is a situation where certain ways of behaving are acceptable only for some members of a society. Some priests, for example, the Yoruba *Shango* priests, are expected to plait their hair and dress like women on ceremonial occasions. Academicians are also expected to put on their academic robes (gowns) on ceremonial occasions; Nigerian *Obas* and

Chiefs are expected to dress differently from ordinary people and behave with grace and dignity.

Explicit and Implicit Culture

The patterns of a culture are held together, or integrated, in terms of abstractions often referred to as themes, configurations, drive or postulates. The patterns and themes that make up a culture range from an extreme type called explicit or overt to the opposite extreme type called implicit or covert. The explicit culture includes all those features of the design for living of a group, which can be described to an outsider by participants in the culture. Patterns, in general, belong to explicit culture since they are readily abstracted from behaviour and are more or less easily verbalized by the participant. Explicit culture is comprised of culture content and culture forms.

The patterns of implicit culture on the other hand, are thematic principles, which the investigator introduces to explain connections between a wide range of items of culture content, which are not obvious in the world of direct observation. Participants in a culture often find those themes difficult to verbalize since they operate very largely on the unconscious level. The distinction we have just made between overt and covert culture may be of little theoretical significance. Nevertheless, it serves to call our attention to the fact that much of our daily activity is controlled by patterns and themes, although we may not be aware of them. As Oke, (1984) puts it, this unconscious nature of much of our culturally governed behaviour has its own advantage. Much of the routine of daily living is performed without thinking about it at all. It is because normal human beings are so thoroughly trained in the patterns of their culture that they are free to devote their consciousness to new situations and problems.

However, this may have its own disadvantages. The more thoroughly imbued we are with our native culture, the more difficult it is to adapt to one that is new or strange, even when there is a need for such adoption. It may also be difficult to understand the behaviour of peoples whose cultures are different from our own. In the world of today there is a need for a balance, for intercultural understanding and appreciating of others whose ways of life are different from ours. After all, our own view of the world cannot be held to be the ultimate one.

Cultural relativity

We have just mentioned the need for tolerance of other peoples' culture as opposed to the tendency to condemn them as backward, uncivilized and inhuman simply because they are different from our own or because they seem undesirable to most of us. The fact, however, is that customs can be intelligently viewed only in their proper context, not in isolation. The anthropologist's conception of cultural relativity fosters empathy and understanding and it requires impartial observation.

Ethnocentrism

Anthropologists are extremely sensitive to the relativity of cultural patterns and they attempt to appreciate the life styles of other peoples on their own terms, avoiding ethnocentrism. The assumption that is embedded in ethnocentrism is that the way we do things is normal and that any other way of doing things is immoral. An ethnocentric Nigerian, without seeking the reason why, or trying to relate to other aspects of the *Kru* or *Kpelle* culture of Liberia, condemns as immoral, even abominable.

An ethnocentric person may be unable to recognize and solve social problems in his own culture not to talk of solving the problems in other cultures. An ethnocentric Yoruba may

undergo some socialization before getting married. Such an order involves a difficult physical test, subjecting the body to severe physical punishment, the objective being to test the man's courage and endurance attributes – attributes that are regarded by the Fulani as essential for a man to be considered as a husband.

Ethnocentrism prevents the understanding of human nature and promotion of human advancement because it precludes critical appraisal of one's own customs and those of other peoples. Becoming conscious of and analytical about our own custom is often a painful business, but we do it best by leaving and understanding other peoples customs. We can then begin to become conscious of the codes that normally lie hidden beneath our everyday behaviour.

Culture shock

In a situation of dramatic cultural contact, let us say between two destructive groups, individuals (in both groups) may experience a profound emotional reaction, which anthropologists call culture shock. Shock includes inability to make sense of the behaviour of others or to predict what they will say or do. Most societies that have been joined by people of different origin, custom and background have experienced culture shock at one point or another. However, the shock is not necessarily prolonged as soon as the two groups have begun to observe each other's way of life and tried to tolerate it.

Culture and Personality

Having discussed some important elements in what culture is made up it is also necessary for us to see the relationship between culture and the individual. Anthropologists have generally attributed the formation of personality to a complex interaction between an individual's genetic inheritance and his life experiences. Community integration and the growth of

mutually meaningful identities are created out of the idiosyncrasies of the numerous individuals of that community. Each society, however, has certain cultural imperatives with an in built flexibility or tolerance which allows for personal uniqueness or personal identity.

In other words, each individual organizes his behaviour on the basis of socially provided and shared motives. Cultural values may or may not sanction the expression of such subjective, personal and idiosyncratic motives, nevertheless, individuals are creative enough to find outlets in their culture for diverse personal desires. Thus, we could say that every man is (a) like all other men, (b) like some other men, and (c) like no other man (Kluckhohn and Murray, 1954;53) As human beings we share some features of personal identity. Universal aspects of human biology determine these features, by the physical environment we inhabit and by the fact of our socio-cultural environment and membership.

Individuals have always maintained their personal identities. Despite cultural demands or cultural imperatives, they have always found outlets for their personal hopes and development. Let us identify some of the aspects of the individual identity and discuss how they fit together.

Ego Identity

This is referred to as an individual's private identity. It consists of one's subjective sense of personal continuity through time and some awareness of one's own characteristics. This identity requires a complex, cognitive, perceptual capacity and a memory to provide continuity of self-experience. Some of the modern, non-human primates have ego identities but their incapacity to speak or evolve a language has limited their utilization of these identities. The apes are unable to communicate their subjective experiences to one another or to their offspring, as we humans are able to do.

This is one major feature that distinguishes the human from non-human primates.

Social Identity

This aspect reflects the position of an individual in a community or a society. This involves a person's social roles, status, position or identification in the community. These features enter into the individual cognition and memories, thus he perceives himself accordingly. In this sense, he has both ego subjective and public collective aspects. Oke (1984) suggests that social identity often consists of others' expectations of a person and that these images enter into the private experience of the subject as a result of communication with others. Sometimes a person has a difficult time maintaining a constituent, or coherent image of himself without this communication from others, but this negative image may change as the judgements of others concerning him reach him.

Psychosocial Identity

This, according to Erikson (1968:61), is simultaneously subjective and objective, individual and social. The subjective aspect of it implies more emotion than is involved in social identity. It is an act of finally becoming oneself or getting it together. The experience may be only half-conscious or even unconscious and it may be only temporary. Erikson suggests that psychosocial identity is a developmental maturational process. He observes, after adolescence when the grown-up body grows together, when matured sexuality seeks partners, and when the fully developed mind begins to envisage a historical perspective and seeks new loyalties, all developments must fuse with each other in a new sense of sameness and continuity. It is apparent however, that many people may never attain the quality of identity experience because their cultural settings may not offer an opportunity for such a degree of person and social integration.

We shall mention some other minor aspects of identity processes, which essentially supplement the three types we have just discussed. A self-concept, for instance, is the individual consciousness of his appearance, strength, beauty and capabilities. It is generally compared with the views that others have of this person and his qualities. A model identity (e.g. ideal) is an individual's private view of the ideal person he might become. It is the standard against which an individual can measure himself. Elements of stigmatized identities are often found in the unconscious world of an individual. Identity confusion is characterized by a state of acute emotional and intellectual impairment. This is often associated with prolonged, unusually painful life experience such as repeated victimization, deprivation, war or imprisonment.

Culture and Man's Freedom

We have introduced the elements of human culture, considered cultures complexity, and examined several approaches to cultural analysis. Now we turn to how culture affects man. Does culture enhance or inhibit our capacity to think critically and to make choices?

Culture as Constraint

Over the long course of human evolution culture became our strategy for survival. But though we can hardly live without it, culture does have some negative consequences. By experiencing the world through symbols and meaning, we become detached, susceptible to the experience of alienation unknown to other life forms. Further, established cultural systems sometimes impose a form of social inertia on our lives, driving us to relive troubling patterns from the past. Extensive social inequality is supported by American culture, by which some enjoy great privilege, while others struggle simply to get by. Women of all social classes have often felt powerless in the face of cultural patterns that reflect the dominance of men. Our emphasis on personal freedom affords us privacy and autonomy yet our culture often denies us the support of human community in which to share the problems of life (Slater, 1976, Bellah, *et. al.,* 1986). Thus, while culture is vital to humans as biological instinct in other forms of life, it poses special problem for us.

Culture as Freedom

Human beings may appear to be prisoners of culture, just as other animals are prisoners of biology. But careful thought about the ideas suggests a crucial difference. Over millions of years of human evolution, the unfolding of culture gradually took our species from a world shaped largely by biology to a world we shape for ourselves.

Therefore, although culture seems at times to circumscribe our lives, it embodies the human capacity for hope and creative choice. The evidence that supports this conclusion lies all around us. Fascinating cultural diversity exists in our own society, and even greater variety is found around the world. Furthermore, far from static, culture is ever changing. And although it sometimes functions as constraints, culture also presents a continuous source of human opportunity. The more we discover about the operation of our culture, the greater our ability to use the freedom it offers.

The Theoretical Analysis of Culture

Culture allows us to understand ourselves, and the world around us. Sociologists and anthropologists, however, have the special task of understanding culture. Several theoretical approaches are essential in the special task of understanding culture. The structural functional analysis sees society as a relatively stable system of integrated parts devised to meet human needs. Thus, various cultural traits help to maintain the overall operation of society. The stability of cultural systems

is rooted in core values. In this way, structural functionalism draws in the philosophical doctrine of idealism, the assertion that ideas are the basis of human reality. Experienced in a wide range of everyday activities, core values serve to bind range of everyday activities. In other words, core values serve to bind all members of a society together.

The social conflict paradigm views culture in a very different light. To social conflict theorists, culture forms a dynamic arena of conflict generated by social inequality. This paradigm draws attention to the ways in which cultural traits serve the needs of some members of society at the expense of others. Social conflict analysis critically questions why certain values dominate in a society. What forces generate one set of values rather than another? Who benefits from these society arrangements? Many, using this paradigm especially socio-logists influenced by Karl Marx, argue that values are shaped by a society's system of economic production, it is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence. Marx asserted that it is their social existence that determines their consciousness (Marx, 1977:4 orig. 1859).

The third theoretical paradigm is derived from ecology, the natural science that delves into the relationship between a living organism and its environment. Cultural ecology amounts to a theoretical paradigm that explores the relation-ship between human culture and the physical environment. This paradigm investigates how climate and the availability of food, water and other natural resources shape cultural patterns. Cultural ecology expands our understanding of culture by highlighting its inter-play with the environment. This approach reveals how cultural patterns arise among human beings in response to particular natural conditions. However, this paradigm has several limitations. First, we can only rarely draw simple or direct connections between the environment and culture, because cultural and physical forces interact in subtle and complex ways. The approach equally

has less application to technologically sophisticated societies that extensively manipulate the natural world.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, it can be seen that culture refers to patterned ways of human life. Although several species have simple forms of culture, only human beings rely on culture for survival. Culture emerged over the long course of human evolution as the brain gradually enlarged. Basic elements of culture appeared some two million years ago. The complex culture that we call civilization emerged during the last 12,000 years. Through symbols, which are the basis of culture, we attach meaning to objects and action. Language is the symbolic means with which we transmit culture from generation to generation.

Consequently, culture involves not only common patterns but social diversity. Subcultures are distinctive cultural forms that characterize each segment of society. Counter cultures are strongly at odds with widely accepted cultural pattern. Multiculturalism refers to efforts to enhance awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity. Having learned the standards of one culture, we often evaluate other cultures ethnocentrically. The alternative to ethnocentrism, called cultural relativism, means judging different cultures according to their own standards. The structural functional paradigm views culture as a relatively stable system built on core values. Specific cultural traits are understood in terms of their function in maintaining the entire cultural system. The social-conflict paradigm envisions cultural system as dynamic arenas of social inequality and conflict. Cultural patterns typically benefit some categories of people more than others.

Finally, culture is never static as invention, discovery and diffusion, generate cultural change. Not all parts of a cultural system change at the same rate. The consequence of this is what we call cultural lag.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

Man and Technology

R.A. OLAOYE

Introduction

Technology which is a term traceable to the Greek word, technology "art/craft" refers to the means or activity by which man seeks to change or master his environment (Oguremi, 1989: 3-5). It is the total means employed by a people to provide materials essential to human existence and comfort through the acquisition of a technical method to achieve a practical purpose.

In the context of the brief definition stated above, it must be clear that technology is not a native of any society. Rather every society of the world possesses technology, which exists in one form or another. This is because people live in diverse environments whose challenges are tackled by the skill and techniques, which are peculiar to such environments. In this regard, technology has both universal and environmental concepts.

The purpose of this work is to examine the relationship between man and technology. In doing this, attention will be drawn to the early history of man and technology. Next, the progress, which has been recorded by man overtime, will be highlighted. We then conclude with a brief review of the points raised in the work.