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ACADEMIC ENGLISH

Практическое пособие для магистрантов факультета социологии и философии

Ижевск 2010

Министерство образования и науки РФ
Государственное образовательное учреждение высшего
профессионального образования
Удмуртский государственный университет

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Настоящее пособие адресовано магистрантам, а также аспирантам и преподавателям философско-социологического факультета. Пособие призвано помочь специалистам усовершенствовать навыки чтения и перевода оригинальной научной литературы, подготовить устное или письменное высказывание по теме специальности и по диссертационной работе в форме сообщения или доклада, а также изложить содержание прочитанного в письменном виде в форме резюме и аннотации.

Предисловие

Основной целью изучения иностранного языка магистрантами всех специальностей факультета социологии и философии является достижение практического владения языком, позволяющего использовать его в научной работе.

Практическое владение иностранным языком в рамках магистратуры предполагает наличие таких умений в различных видах речевой коммуникации, которые дают возможность:

– свободно читать оригинальную литературу на иностранном языке в соответствующей отрасли знаний;

– оформлять извлеченную из иностранных источников информацию в виде перевода или резюме;

– делать сообщения и доклады на иностранном языке на темы, связанные с научной работой аспиранта (соискателя),

– вести беседу по специальности.

Таким образом, настоящее пособие имеет практическое назначение, что обуславливает его структуру и содержание разделов.

В первой части пособия предлагаются речевые формулы, обороты и выражения, необходимые для формулировки проблемы исследования, описания примененных материалов и методов, систематизации и интерпретации полученных данных, построения заключения и выводов.

Во второй части пособия представлены модели аннотаций, рецензий, резюме.

В третьей части содержатся оригинальные научные тексты разных жанров по направлению «социология культуры».

Пособие может быть использовано при изучении английского языка как на занятиях под руководством преподавателя, так и для самостоятельного приобретения навыков чтения и перевода научных текстов социологической направленности, а так же изложения содержания прочитанного материала в устной или письменной форме

Материалы пособия апробированы на практических занятиях с магистрантами первого года обучения факультета социологии и философии, а одна из учащихся является его соавтором.

Данное пособие носит экспериментальный характер и его составители будут признательны всем читателям за замечания, рекомендации и пожелания.

I. The structure of the paper

1. Introduction

1.1 Setting a goal:

- The   … chief/general   aim
          … central/ key/ultimate   goal
          … main/particular   purpose
          … major/primary   task … of this paper/study is to investigate P[1].

- One of the main/ principle objectives is P.
- The subject matter of our paper/ study/ analysis/ research/ discussion is P.
- The present paper/ investigation   … focuses on/ deals with P.
                                                         … is devoted to problems/ issues of P.

- In this article   …I aim to determine the mechanisms of P.
                         …I examine/ concentrate on the nature/ characteristics/ features of P.

1.2 Summary lead:

The structure of the article is as follows. The first section reviews/ describes/ clarifies/ outlines/ sketches P. Section 2 shows that Q. Section 3 argues that P. The final section proposes/ summarizes R.

This paper presents a new (complex/ structural) approach to the study of P. The empirical results are described in section 1. In section 2, I will address/ discuss/ characterize/ comment on/ specify/ tackle Q. Section 3 turns to P/ presents theoretical results. Section 4 concludes with a discussion of implications/ consequences of R.

This paper proposes a new methodological framework within which P can be studied. After analyzing the data, it is concluded that Q. The results of the study are evaluated and assessed in the light of the problems of Q. Additionally, R is examined.

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[1] P, Q, R – a proposition, clause or their equivalent.

1.3 Materials and methods:

- In our study
  … we have adopted/ applied an innovative approach to modeling P.
  … we develop/ offer/ use a method of P/

- Our analysis/ investigation
  … is based on evidence/calculations/ estimates of P.
  … rests on/ focuses on observations of P.

- This method/ approach
  … serves for/ aids in organizing the knowledge about P.

- This framework
  … combines functional with formal explanation.

2. Compositional formulas

2.1 Transitions:

- I shall
  …start/begin/continue/ end/ finish/ close with/ by P.
- To begin with/ First
  …we may consider P.
- Second/ Finally
  …we are going to see/ examine whether P/
- In closing,
  …I want to discuss P.
- I have
  … already/ just… … mentioned/ pointed out, that P.
- It is
  …important to emphasize that P.
  …interesting to see if P.
- I shall
  …examine this issue   …later.
- To conclude,
  …this paper has explored/ investigated/ shown/ established P.

2.2 Text generating lexicon:

- The present   …study
  …examines P.
  …discussion
  …is based on the notion/ hypothesis of P.
- In the present study
  …we set out to analyze p/ we advance the hypothesis of P.
- Our research is based on
  …the concept/ idea/ theory that P.
- First,
  …I want to review/ introduce new principles.
- Now
  …I must emphasize that P/ say a few words about…
- Let us now
  …turn to P/ consider P.
- We must now
  …define/ determine/ establish/ estimate/ enquire

- Finally,   into P.
                                 …I find it necessary to consider P/ to turn out attention to P.
- The following   …table/ diagram/ figure shows/ tells us that P.
- The following examples   …may serve as illustrations.

2.3. Further intentions:

- To solve the problem,   ...we employ the approach/ method/ strategy/ technique of P.
- To supply evidence,   ...we should figure out P/ will focus on P.
- To base our position,   ...we place the issue in another perspective.
                          ...can serve as a basis for (the theory of) P.
- This approach   ...can be extensively/ properly/ reasonably applied to P.
- This topic   ...should be studied/ investigated closely/ carefully/ thoroughly.

- Our approach/
  analysis/ study   ...seeks to resolve the problem of P.
- Here, we   ...accept/ admit the approach/ hypothesis/ adhere to the assumption/ idea that P.

- The approach/ claim
  adopted here   ..is based on observations of / considerations/ assumption that P.

- To show that P,
    …I/we shall   ...admit the theory/ postulate view of Q.
                           ...put forward a hypothesis/ model of Q

3. References to authors and bibliography:
(F - the referred author, [NN) - reference to a bibliographic item)

- According to F[2], P.
- Following F, I will refer to P as Q.
- We can follow F in assuming that P.
- This result was obtained by F.
- Such problems are fully discussed by F in [NN][3].
- Such cases   ...would support/ conflict with F's analysis.

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[2] F, S – the author of a scientific paper
[3] [NN] a reference to a scientific paper and it's author

- F's ...article/ analysis/ hypothesis/ proposal/ point/ argument/ idea/
  ...rests on two basic ideas, P and Q.
- In her study,   ...F   ...identified/ discovered/ established P.
- I shall quote [NN] to show that Q: ...«P».
- The following passage from [NN] illustrates this principle,   ...«P».
- P is claimed/ explored/ faced/ found/ defined/ enveloped   ...in [NN]
- P is the central issue explored   ...in [NN]
- The most complete account of this problem is found   ...in [NN]
- A striking example of the influence of P on Q can be found   ...in [NN]
- Proposals relating to P are developed further   ...in [NN]
- This viewpoint receives strong scientific support,   ...c.f. [NN]
- This theory finds support in recent studies/ gives rise to a critical literature;
  ...e.g. [NN]

4. Data analysis

4.1. Empirical observations, data, illustrations, examples:

- This research/ study/ claim   ...rests on findings/ materials of P.
- This investigation   ...draws on observations of P.
- It is important   ...to examine P and determine/ establish Q.
- In order to examine/ establish/
  obtain P   ...it is essential to estimate/ evaluate Q.
- In order to reveal P   ...it is essential to validate.
- For P we need certain data,   ...such as observations/ calculations/
  estimates of Q.
- From this perspective,   ...let us re-examine/ determine/ assess/
  explore P.
- As an illustration of this approach,   ...we consider here the investigation made
  by F.
- In this section I want   ...to turn to examples/ to give instances of P/
  to analyze the data.
- Some data observations   ...are given below.
- Some concrete illustrations/
  examples   ...are given below.
- These data   ...contribute material for the testing of our
  claim.

- These findings ...provide vital information about Q.
- Our arguments ...are based on data (materials).
- These observations/ facts may be encountered ...in the literature on the subject.
- Recent research/ study/ work ...shows/ has shown that P.
- Field research ...revealed the shape of P.
- Sociologists ...have reported a link between P and Q.
- These reports/ documents ...hint that P/ prompted us to explore P.
- These studies …shed light on P.
- Evidence ... indicates/ shows/ suggests/ demonstrates that P.
- Further evidence ...includes the facts that P.
- A considerable amount of evidence ...suggests that P.
- These cases/ facts/ observations/ findings/ discoveries ...support our analysis.
- These estimates/ numbers ...support our view.
- Our observations ... provide evidence for P.
- These factors ...influence/ activate/ control/ determine/ obstruct/ impede P.
  ... are linked to/ contribute to P.

4.2. Experiments, tests, estimates, measurements, verifications:

- 'The design of our experiment has been ...to test (conduct simulations of) P/ modeling P.
- Our experiments were conducted ...as part of the Joint Global study.
- Experimental observations ...have been made to determine/ verify P.
- The results we report here ...were obtained through interviews.
- In our experiment, ...P is studied/ investigated/ examined/ discovered/ established.
- In a series of studies ...we asked students to rate P.
- A series of studies has been conducted ...to find a correlation between P and Q
  ...to investigate connections (differences/ similarities/ relationships) between P and Q
- To test the hypothesis, ...we conducted a survey.
- Recent experimental studies ...served to show that P.

4.3. Results and their representation:

- Our investigations/ Analyses of these data ...reveal/ show that P
- The findings of this study/ ...reveal (that) P.
- Our study of P ...indicates that Q.
- This study ...presents evidence to/ lends support to the hypothesis of P.

- In general, ...the results of our research indicate P/ establish a clear pattern: P.

- The following table ...shows (that) P/ provides values of P.
- Table 1/ Appendix 2 ...lists the processes of P/ presents (a simplified summary of) P.
  ...displays (lays out) the relationships I have been discussing.
  ...illustrates this case.
- Graph 1 ...presents the data/ illustrates P/ gives a visual picture of P.
- The list ...supplies information on P/ specifies P (in alphabetical order).

5. Discussion

5.1. Results and their interpretation:

- This analysis ...serves to provide an explanation/ interpretation for P.
- Our analysis ...points to another explanation.
- By making explicit these distinctions, ...I hope to provide (shall give) an explanation for P.

- The most logical explanation for P/ My explanation ...is (based on the concept of Q.
- This point ...requires (some) justification
- Our observations ...support the supposition that P/ permit a reconstruction of P.
- Our results ...indicate/ suggest that/ rule out P/ provide strong support for the model of P.
  ...reveal close agreement between the experimental and computed values of P.
- As our results/ observations indicate,
  ...there is a connection (relationship) between P and Q.
  ...the rate of P depends on/ changes with the amount of Q.
  ...this factor affects the rate (range) of P/ produces an effect on P.
  ...this effect leads to/ is connected with (related to/ produced by) P.

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- We can use these results to show that/ The results obtained suggest that...
- These phenomena   ...can be understood as (explained by) P.

6. Conclusion

6.1. Prospects and applications:

- These findings/ our results/ these data
  - ...may be of considerable practical value.
  - ...present a practical benefit.
  - ...are of great practical importance.
  - ...are helpful for practical purposes.
  - ...can bring an advance in our understanding of P.
  - ...provide an explanation of Q.
- In future it will be possible
  - ...to use this method/ approach/ technique...
  - ...to put theory into practice.
  - ...to coordinate efforts.
  - ...to develop P.
  - ...to offer opportunities for P.
  - ...to assist in/ to avoid problems in/ to gain access to P/ to promote/ succeed in P.

6.2. Proposals for further research:

- Here   ...serious problems/ grave (unresolved) questions (still) remain.
- This (aspect/problem/issue)   ...deserves further investigation.
- Further investigations/ research/ studies   ...would be fruitful/ is (urgently) required before P.
- In this area of study   ...much research remains to be done.
- P is a major task   ...in the future study of Q.
- The matter/ problem/ question   ...is not decided yet.

6.3. Concluding remarks/ summary:

- In conclusion, it may be said that P. To conclude, this paper has explored P.
- Finally, we turn to P/ I want to note that P.
- For completeness, we show/ I should add that P.
- As exemplified by our study of P, Q.

- Our conclusions focus on aspects such as the fact that P.
- To this end, we summarize our main principles.
- To summarize/ In summary/ To sum up, P.
- The major points covered by this paper may be summarized as follows: P.
- Now we can conclude that P.
- In this paper,...

  ... I have made the following claims. First, that there is P. Secondly, that Q. Finally, R.

  ... I have investigated/ examined P.

- In general/ On the whole/ Thus,

  ...our results indicate/ our theorizing shows that P.

- The main findings of the study

  ...reveal/ show how systematic such phenomena can be.

- The main conclusion is that P and Q

  ...are connected with each other.

II. ABSTRACTING; REVIEWING

1. Abstract

An abstract is a summary of a body of information. Sometimes, abstracts are in fact called summaries—sometimes, executive summaries or executive abstracts. There are two types of abstracts: the descriptive abstract and the informative abstract.

Descriptive Abstracts

The descriptive abstract provides a description of the report's main topic and purpose as well an overview of its contents. As you can see from the example, it is very short—usually a brief one- or two-sentence paragraph. Usually, it appears on the title page. In this type of abstract, you don't summarize any of the facts or conclusions of the report.

Example 1

Max Weber, historiography, medical knowledge, and the formation of medicine
Fran M. Collyer

Abstract

This paper applies Max Weber's proposition regarding the differences between the 'sciences' to the 'historicist controversy': the problems emerging from opposing approaches to understanding the past. The historiography in question is the development of the 'biomedical model' of health and disease, and the rise of 'medicine' in the course of 19th century Europe and Britain. While Weber's theoretical framework does not answer the questions posed by present-day scholars about specific historical events, it enables a critique of the process through which history is 'constructed', and offers an alternative approach to the 'transformation' of 19th century medicine.

Example 2

Sociological Futures: From Clock Time to Event Time
by Lisa Adkins
Goldsmiths, University of London

Abstract

This article articulates a shift from clock time to event time, a shift which raises particular challenges to dominant sociological strategies in regard to temporality, especially in regard to the future. In particular it raises challenges to the idea that alternative futures may be found by stretching time to the time disenfranchised or by seeking out and uncovering counter hegemonic forms of time. Taking feminist sociological approaches to time as a case in point, this article shows that while such strategies were relevant when time operated externally to events; they have little traction when time unfolds with events. For Sociologists to continue in their promise of working to secure alternative futures, their analyses must therefore become entangled in event time.

Example 3

Decisions, Decisions, Decisions Intentionality, the Growth of Knowledge, and Cultural Evolution: Establishing Evolutionary Reasoning in the Social Sciences
Jon VanWieren
Western Michigan University

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to work toward developing evolutionary reasoning in the social sciences. There are reasons for being critical of bland evolutionary metaphors and simplistic applications of neo-Darwinian methods and conceptual tools to the study of human culture and society. I believe, however, that the arguments on the other side of these criticisms are stronger. There is sufficient grounds and evidence supporting some of the insights from evolutionary epistemology regarding the growth of knowledge. Here I focus on the role of intentionality and cumulative knowledge in driving cultural evolution, as well as some of the implications of a co-evolutionary understanding of human biology and

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culture. I present this case to the social sciences, particularly areas of science and technology studies, making the argument that the approach of deconstructionism and/or metaphysical constructivism, typical of the field, is incapable of dealing with the realties of the natural world and some of the radical implications of new knowledge across the life sciences. I argue here for a re-naturalized understanding of human beings, culture, and society.

Informative Abstracts

The informative abstract, as its name implies, provides information from the body of the paper — specifically, the key facts and conclusions. To put it another way, this type of abstract summarizes the key information from every major section in the body of the paper.

The requirements for the informative abstract are as follows:

- Summarizes the key facts, conclusions, and other important information in the body of the report.
- Usually about 10 percent of the length of the full report: for example, an informative abstract for a 10-page report would be 1 page. This ratio stops after about 30 pages, however. For 50- or 60-page reports, the abstract should not go over 3 to 4 pages.
- Summarizes the key information from each of the main sections of the report, and proportionately so (a 3-page section of a 10-page report ought to take up about 30 percent of the informative abstract).
- Phrases information in a very dense, compact way. Sentences are longer than normal and are crammed with information. The abstract tries to compact information down to that 10-percent level. It's expected that the writing in an informative abstract will be dense and heavily worded. (However, do not omit normal words such as *the*, *a*, and *an*.
- Omits introductory explanation, unless that is the focus of the main body of the report. Definitions and other background information are omitted if they are not the major focus of the report. The informative abstract is *not* an introduction to the subject matter of the report—and it is *not* an introduction!
- Omits citations for source borrowings. If you summarize information that you borrowed from other writers, you do *not* have to repeat the citation in the informative abstract (in other words, no brackets with source numbers and page numbers).

- Includes key statistical detail. Don't sacrifice key numerical facts to make the informative abstract brief. One expects to see numerical data in an informative abstract.
- Omits descriptive-abstract phrasing. You should not see phrasing like this: "This report presents conclusions and recommendations from a survey done on grammar-checking software." Instead, the informative abstract presents the details of those conclusions and recommendations.

Study the difference between the informative and descriptive phrasing in the following example of informative abstract:

Example 4

Palmquist, M., & Young, R. (1992). The Notion of Giftedness and Student Expectations About Writing. Written Communication, 9(1), 137-168.

Research reported by Daly, Miller, and their colleagues suggests that writing apprehension is related to a number of factors we do not yet fully understand. This study suggests that included among those factors should be the belief that writing ability is a gift. Giftedness, as it is referred to in the study, is roughly equivalent to the Romantic notion of original genius. Results from a survey of 247 postsecondary students enrolled in introductory writing courses at two institutions indicate that higher levels of belief in giftedness are correlated with higher levels of writing apprehension, lower self-assessments of writing ability, lower levels of confidence in achieving proficiency in certain writing activities and genres, and lower self-assessments of prior experience with writing instructors. Significant differences in levels of belief in giftedness were also found among students who differed in their perceptions of the most important purpose for writing, with students who identified "to express your own feelings about something" as the most important purpose for writing having the highest mean level of belief in giftedness. Although the validity of the notion that writing ability is a special gift is not directly addressed, the results suggest that belief in giftedness may have deleterious effects on student writers.

2. Review

A review of a scientific publication is a description, critical analysis, and an evaluation on the quality, meaning, and significance of a book or an article, not a retelling. It should focus on the book's or article's purpose, content, and authority. A critical book or article review is not a report or a summary. It is a reaction paper in which strengths and weaknesses of the material are analyzed. It should include a statement of what the author has tried to do, evaluates how well (in the opinion of the reviewer) the author has succeeded, and presents evidence to support this evaluation.

Book reviews are highly personal and reflect the opinions of the reviewer. A review can be as short as 50-100 words, or as long as 1500 words, depending on the purpose of the review.

Patterns:

1. This book/article reflects the current knowledge in P. The author frames the central question of his monograph as follows: «P»; in answer to the question, the author proposes Q/ pursues the question whether P by breaking it down into two subquestions, R and Q. Accordingly, the book/ paper fails into two halves: P and Q. The (methodological) (sub)question discussed in Part 1 of this monograph, reads as follows: P. The bulk of this chapter is devoted to P. In F's approach P is viewed as Q. F develops an account which brings out a picture of P, treating a number of problems that have traditionally been recognized to be especially problematic areas for Q theories, and then proceeds to investigate the nature of R and sets out to provide a definition for Q. The author brings the following example into the discussion, P. F's approach does go a little way towards accounting for P. F's conclusions focus on aspects such as the fact that P. F is backing up his argument with data on P. In addition to the fact that Q, F's models offer a number of other differences: P is defined with respect to a fixed set of features. The conclusions/ findings/ results of F's study lend some support to the expectation that P/ further elucidate the processes of P. F's investigation provides evidence with respect to the role of P in R.

2. The book has a variety of virtues; I do, however, have certain criticisms. One concerns P. Another criticism concerns F's discussion of Q. The product of F's labor invites close critical scrutiny; here, I can deal with a number of main points only. This way of organizing the book has significant drawbacks. In the first place,

P. Secondly, Q. The most serious weakness of the book is that P. The author fails, in my view, to make a convincing (enough) argument for his proposed reduction of P. This is an erudite and meticulously executed book, but I am not wholly convinced by it. Apart from theoretical disagreements (like the one just mentioned), my major doubts are twofold. First, I am not sure that P. My second doubt has to do with Q. On the whole, PP do not lessen the book's value.

3. F's book is (thus) timely and important/ is clearly written and the arguments convincing. Many possible research questions are raised. F's book has raised many intriguing problems and will be a stimulus for a great deal of productive theoretical and descriptive research on the phenomena. This investigation will stimulate others to come closer to an understanding of P. The book's style is engaging and light. F's book is. very well done in every respect/ F's endeavor is successful. I recommend it highly. In brief, the theoretical value of NN is obvious.

III. READER

Michael Minkov, *What Makes Us Different and Similar: A New Interpretation of the World Values Survey and Other Cross-Cultural Data*. Bulgaria: Klasika y Stil Publishing House, 2007. 257 pp. ISBN 978-954-327-023-1

This is a book that follows in the footsteps pioneered by Geert Hofstede. The author has attempted to identify new nation-level dimensions of cultural variation by drawing on some of the richer sources of survey data that are now available. In particular, he has drawn on the publicly available databank provided by the World Values Survey (WVS). His philosophical position is that dimensions of culture do not exist in any objective sense. To better understand cultural variations around the world, he therefore argues that we should build on existing characterizations by identifying those groupings of cultural attributes that illuminate the particular contrasts that interest us. Starting with the dimensions that Inglehart (1997) himself identified from the World Values Survey, Minkov factor analyses specific groups of national item means to define the three dimensions that he favours. He labels these as Exclusionism versus Universalism, Indulgence versus Restraint, and Monumentalism versus Flexumilility. Each factor is defined by up to six WVS item means, and Minkov provides the reader with scores on these factors for up to 72 nations.

The bulk of the book is given over to the presentation and discussion of correlations between Minkov's factors and other available nation-level scores. This enables him to present his case for the utility of looking at culture from his particular perspective. The first factor turns out to be strongly correlated with existing characterizations of individualism– collectivism, so there is little here that is new, except that Minkov's analysis strongly emphasizes in-group versus out-group relationships, rather than the many other attributes that have been tacked onto different definitions of individualism–collectivism.

Minkov's second factor is most strongly defined by the endorsement of items referring to one's happiness, one's sense of freedom and one's leisure. The nation in his sample scoring highest on Indulgence is Nigeria and the nation scoring highest on Restraint is Pakistan. Minkov suggests that this dimension may be similar to earlier discussions of cultural difference in terms of their tightness versus looseness. The tightness– looseness dimension has in fact been explored

recently by Gelfand et al. (2006), and scores for 33 nations were reported recently by Gelfand (2006). The scores for nations that overlap between these two analyses do show a modestly positive correlation.

The positive pole of Minokov's third factor is most strongly defined by national pride, wanting to make one's parents proud and seeing religion as important. The top-scoring nation is Morocco. The negative pole is characterized by humility and seeing oneself as not having a stable invariant self, with Japan the most extreme case. Minkov sees some conceptual parallels between this dimension and Hofstede's characterization of masculinity–femininity. An interesting aspect of this dimension is that the East Asian nations that have been so much studied by management researchers in recent times all score at the Flexumility extreme end of this dimension. Globally, they are as atypical as the US is on some other dimensions.

It would be easy to argue that the construction of these factors has been opportunistic, and that by putting together other groups of items different dimensions could be constructed. However, there are a number of reasons why Minkov's presentation is both interestingly provocative and potentially useful. First, he has had very wide experience of living and working in differing cultural contexts, and he uses these experiences by quoting many anecdotes that bring alive the issues that he wants to emphasize. He has a deep understanding of the languages and cultures of some of the regions that have been most neglected by researchers, including Northern, Central and Eastern Europe as well as Arab cultures, and this provides a refreshing antidote to the Anglo perspective taken by many commentators. Second, the WVS databank has two strong advantages over sources that have been used by earlier researchers: the data are derived from representative national samples, and the range of nations sampled spans the world much more adequately than heretofore. This raises the likelihood of picking up aspects of cultural difference that will be missed if we restrict our gaze to the most prosperous economies. These aspects may be universally present, but can be less conspicuous within a smaller sample of nations. Third, Minkov is not afraid to examine a very wide range of correlates of his dimensions, including personality dimensions and recent studies in genetics. His coverage of relevant studies is broad and up to the minute, although it does at times involve some rather hectic jumping around between different levels of analysis.

A source of continuing debate among those who analyse nations in terms of dimensions concerns how to handle the problem of survey response style. Persons in some nations are more likely to record agreement with survey items than those in other nations. Hofstede and Schwartz discount response style. Minkov sides with Inglehart and leaves it in. From my perspective this poses a

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problem. Minkov states that his three dimensions are independent of one another, but in fact two of the three correlations between the dimension scores that he provides in the book are quite strongly significant. The scores on his dimensions also correlate at up to .70 with measures of nation-level acquiescence identified in my own earlier studies (Smith, 2004). It appears to me that the dimension that he describes as Monumentalism–Flexumility is actually built on respondents' greater and lesser degrees of acquiescent responding. Thus it may be that the best measurement of this dimension would be achieved by not discounting acquiescence, whereas for the best measurement of the other dimensions one should discount it. Indeed, I find that when available estimates of acquiescence are partialled out, Minkov's Indulgence–Restraint dimension does correlate with Gelfand's Tight–Loose scores at around .55.

Discussing culture in terms of national differences is not to everyone's taste. Minkov does briefly take note of the views of those who argue that variability within nations is so great as to make generalizations fruitless. However, he tells the reader that such views are best seen as an expression of the wish of members of western cultures to see themselves and those around them as unique. Whether we concede this point or not, this book makes a persuasive case for the continuing utility of nation-level dimensions in framing our analyses of culture. Dimensions aside, the vivid examples that he cites can make illuminating contributions to any discussion of the management of cultural difference.

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Article Review

Women and Weight: Gendered Messages on Magazine Covers

The purpose of this article was to compare and contrast the covers of popular men and women's magazines. The authors hypothesized that women's magazines were much more likely to have key messages or articles about enhancing bodily appearance than that of men's magazines. Further, they felt that the discovered messages on women's covers would be more conflicting or hypocritical than those of men's magazine covers.

The researchers gathered their research material through analyses of twenty-one magazines. Six monthly issues dedicated to varying seasons were used for each magazine title. The total amount of magazines examined was 69

covers of women's magazines and 54 covers of men's magazines. The authors then used a checklist that had the following headings: presence of a diet message, exercise message, cosmetic surgery message, and general weight loss message and if there was existence of a conflicting message beside one another. The percentage for each specific magazine was determined by dividing the number of magazine issues that contained each checklist item by the total number of magazine issues examined.

The author decided to use an experimental method approach to their research. This method was effective as they were able to prove their hypothesis to be true through the duration of their research. I found this approach very easy to follow. I knew from the beginning what they were hoping to accomplish. Their methods of gathering evidence were simple and quantitative, in that they used numbers to reach statistical points, which are always effectual to readers. What I found to be most effective was the authors' ability to take their quantitative research and embellish on it, advancing it into qualitative research. They used the best of both worlds, numerical evidence and the numerical evidence applied to the readers of the magazine, the possible outcomes and the affect these cover messages are causing. Which allows a deeper understanding of the effect media is having on present day society. However, an apparent weakness was the limitation of magazines selected. There are hundreds of magazines in print and to generalize all magazines as either men or women's is inaccurate, as well as there are magazines that in no way would be appropriate for this study. Such as National Geographic or Macleans. Further proving that, this was an experimental method of research.

Resource: http://www.exampleessays.com/viewpaper/39819.html

Conference Paper

Culture as an Autopoietic System
Douglas J Goodman

Abstract:

This paper argues for the importance of the concept of an autopoietic system for the sociological study of culture. The autopoietic model of culture provides a more sociological definition of culture. It offers fresh insights into such classic problems as the autonomy of culture, the relation between producers' intent and receivers' meanings, and the political effects of the everyday use of culture. The paper concludes by showing the value of the autopoietic model to potential research projects.

The sociology of culture has yet to provide an adequate answer to its most fundamental question: What is culture and how is it to be distinguished from what is not culture? For most of the history of sociology, culture has been conveniently defined as that which anthropology studies[4]. As the difference between sociology and anthropology has tended to collapse, sociologists have more and more encroached upon anthropology's conceptual domain (perhaps in retaliation for anthropology's encroachment on our domain of industrialized societies). For the most part, however, sociology's use of culture has been fundamentally different from anthropology's use.

The concept of culture in anthropology could be called imperialistic in that it claims to cover everything. Cultural anthropology is not a specialty area within anthropology with its own delineated province, as, for example, an anthropology of work or education. One can do a cultural anthropology of any area. Culture in anthropology is a conceptual focus upon the human made, or even more broadly, the human view, or somewhat more precisely, the webs of meanings that constitute the human view.

Sociology has evidenced an enduring but ambivalent interest in this broader notion of culture. There has been a Marxist tradition that sees culture as a form of ideology, a Durkheimian tradition that sees culture as providing an integrating framework for increasingly divided social relations, and an interactionist perspective whose micro focus has always had affinities to culture as a complimentary macro concept. However, the recent growth in the sociology of culture has tended to be as a specialty area with a more or less delineated province. Current sociology of culture tends to focus on the arts, literature, popular culture, and such, sometimes wandering into religion and politics, but even there focusing upon delineated characteristics of those fields such as symbolic objects or values. There have certainly been a number of attempts to incorporate anthropology's broader use of culture into sociology[5]. However, such attempts

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[4] To some extent, sociology has always used the concept of culture, but part of sociology's disciplinary definition has been to subsume culture to "social institutions,…social processes, social groups and their practices, or social identities and their constitution" (Long 1997: 2). Culture is usually analyzed as a reflection of social structures (e.g. Marx & Bourdieu) or as a resource for social integration (e.g. Durkheim & Parsons).

[5] For a recent example see Thesis Eleven's (2004) discussion of Alexander's attempt to introduce a cultural sociology which he opposes to the sort of sociology of culture that has come to dominate sociology

have been marginal within a specialty that has until quite recently itself been marginal[6].

Sociology has tended to focus on societies where a specialized delineated sphere of culture has emerged. It is this reference to a delineated sphere that is the most widespread practical use of the concept of culture in sociology. However, an adequate definition of that sphere has not emerged. Instead, sociologists of culture still tend to define culture in the way that anthropologists do, as concerning webs of meaning. This imperialistic definition hardly fits the more limited use of culture in sociology. After all, what is it that we would be interested in as sociologists, that is not embedded in webs of meaning? While a broader definition of culture may be a viable path for a sociology of culture to follow, it is not the path that most research in the sociology of culture has followed. A definition of culture in terms of meaning does not adequately distinguish what sociologists of culture study from what other sociologists study.

An adequate definition of culture for a sociology of culture should begin from the fact that culture is already a delineated sphere in the societies we are studying. We can take a page from Howard Becker's approach in Art Worlds and say that what sociologists mean by culture, "is as clear, but no clearer than it is to the participants" in the culture (Becker 1982: 36). Becker's suggestion is that the proper role for a sociologist of culture is primarily to observe how people make distinctions between what is culture and what is not. Sociologists of culture are not in a position to suggest what the 'true' difference between culture and non-culture should be. This is not to say that we cannot identify certain essential characteristics of cultural objects, for example, that meaning predominates over other characteristics. Nevertheless, it is likely that things become meaningful because they are part of culture and not the other way around. Meaning is not an intrinsic property of objects, nor can meaning be traced back to the projections of a transcendental subject. Instead it appears that meaning is determined by socially organized methods for interpretation. The analysis of meaning systems begins with an observation of the organization of rules for interpreting meaning. The answer to the question, "What is culture?" is not to be found in the things themselves or in

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[6] This is less true of historical sociology which tends to see culture in a more anthropological sense, as a system of meaning (e.g. Kane 2000, Sewell 1999). That disciplines whose main focus is on other times or places use this more encompassing sense of culture is certainly suggestive. One reason for this may be the requirement of an authoritative definition of a structure of meaning which is stable enough for analysis. Such 'interpretations' of the 'culture' are always being promoted in the society being studied by various 'experts' for partisan reasons. It is only the spatial or temporal distance that allows the analyst to appear to offer a non-partisan and purely analytical culture. The appearance of non-partisanship is much more difficult when the culture being analyzed is the analyst's own. Without that distance, to talk of the structure of meaning around, for example, the symbol 'revolution' (Sewell 1996) or 'land' (Kane 2000) involves one immediately in an argument about the fundamental interpretive suppositions.

any emergent characteristic of our perception of the objects, but in the social organization of the delineated sphere of the 'culture world,' to adapt Becker's phrase.

An Autopoietic Model of Culture

In its approach to culture, sociology has tended to vacillate between seeing culture as either patently obvious or as an unanalyzable chaos. In either case, the construction of analytical theoretical categories has been seen as futile. Because of this, the sociology of culture has largely consisted of a series of individual research projects that assume their particular cultural object to be an empirical given. As DiMaggio (1997: 263) points out, the sociology of culture "remains a virtuoso affair." It is a collection of insightful studies that lack any theoretical framework that would allow them to build on one another toward a cumulative endeavor.

To say that an analysis of culture must begin with an analysis of its underlying social organization is not to say that it should be an atheoretical endeavor. Quite to the contrary, it is a theory that points us to the place where our empirical observations should begin. In addition, the theory provides us with sensitizing concepts. It is the lack of an adequate theory of culture that has allowed sociology to improperly apply the anthropological meaning of culture to sociology's more delimited object of study.

What is needed for further progress is a theoretical analysis of culture. Following Becker, this theory should do two things: (1) it should provide analyses in terms of organizations and systems instead of at the level of individuals' decisions; (2) its analyses should begin with empirical observations of a concrete organization or network of people. If our theory is that culture emerges from a social organization, then we must begin with observations of networks of people engaged in what they define as cultural work. Culture cannot be analyzed in the abstract or as a general meaning system, rather we must examine the organization of specific culture systems.

Although Becker's approach in Art Worlds is exemplary, we now have some theoretical tools that Becker did not. In particular, we can recognize that a culture world is analogous to what Niklas Luhmann calls an autopoietic system. The primary purpose of this paper is to argue for the importance of the concept of an autopoietic system in the sociology of culture[7].

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[7] Although I depend heavily on Luhmann's formulation, two differences between my use of the autopoietic model and his should be noted. First, Luhmann rarely considered culture as an autopoietic system. He made numerous references to art and one sustained study (Luhmann 2000), but culture is referred to as "a

For our purposes, autopoietic systems have three essential characteristics. First, autopoietic systems create their own fundamental elements and boundaries through a process of self-reference. Second, autopoietic systems are closed in regards to the environment. Third, autopoietic systems organize their own internal structures. The main part of this presentation will be to show that each of these are true of popular culture. I will then use the autopoietic model to give us a better definition of popular culture and to suggest how this autopoietic model provides fresh in sights into classic problems in the sociology of culture. Finally, I show the value of the autopoietic model to potential research projects.

Popular Culture Creates Its own Fundamental Elements and Boundaries

The relation between a culture system and its cultural objects is not as simple as it first appears. It is true that a culture system is made up of cultural objects, but it is equally true that cultural objects are socially constructed by the culture. In other words, cultural objects do not exist as such before the system constitutes them as cultural objects. Even in those cases where an object, a rock for example, is used in a cultural system—as "pet rocks" were used in 70s popular culture—the rock only becomes a cultural object because it is made such by the popular culture system. To see culture as an autopoietic system is to assume that objects possess no inherent properties that determine that they are or will be cultural objects. Instead, the properties of a cultural object are defined and/or conferred by the culture system. Consequently, an analysis of the cultural object requires an analysis of the organizations that make up the culture system[8].

The process of constituting what is a cultural object also entails the process of constituting what is not a cultural object. This is what is meant when it is said that an autopoietic system forms its own boundaries (Luhmann 1985). External forces can affect whether something becomes part of culture, but these outside forces have their effect only to the extent that they are moves within the culture system and, to that degree, no longer external. Money, for example, can certainly

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semantic tradition used by society" or "the memory of social systems" (quoted in Sevanen 2001). Second, Luhmann (1997: 380–1) believed that systems were either autopoietic or not. This paper will assume not only that there are degrees of autopoiesis, but more crucially that some parts of a system may function autopoietically while another does not. Indeed, one of this paper's conclusion is that while most of the stages of popular culture act like an autopoietic system, the stage of reproduction does not.

[8] It would not be wrong to use the Hegelian term, dialectical, to describe the relation between culture as a system and the cultural object, so long as one dispenses with the idea of progress and overcoming. System and object are internally dependent on each other and both emerge as distinct entities only through their interaction. Whatever traces of idealism one finds in the concept of dialectics, it certainly has strongly empirical implications here. Both a culture system and its cultural objects can only be defined through an observation of the system itself. The characteristics of a cultural objects or of the culture system cannot be intuited ahead of time.

affect whether or not something becomes part of the culture system. However, money does not have the same direct effect that it has in an economic system. For example, the money spent to promote "pet rocks" undoubtedly had something to do with them becoming part of popular culture. Nevertheless, the money had to be spent on marketing that would get the object featured in newspaper stories and television shows. These are tactics within the culture system which may or may not be successful as a cultural strategy. Objects cannot just become part of culture by buying a place within the system.

Decisions about what objects become part of culture certainly involves decisions made by individuals working within a cultural system, nevertheless the constitution of cultural objects and the positing of boundaries are better seen as determinations of the system. To take a popular song as an example, any song that is intended to be popular is written with a knowledge of the genre conventions of the current popular culture system (Berger 1992). Furthermore, whether the song becomes a popular culture object or an idiosyncratic ditty is determined by 'gatekeepers' in the organizations that specialize in the distribution of popular culture songs (Hirsch 1972). In addition, these gatekeepers base their decision upon a model of those who may eventually purchase this song—a model of the consumer which is more closely related to the exigencies of the culture system than the actual consumer (Peterson 1997). Consequently, although individual decisions are involved, the constitution of cultural objects and the positing of boundaries can only be understood through an analysis of the system. This does not mean that individuals don't have agency. It simply indicates the most fruitful level of analysis.

Popular Culture is Closed to its Environment

Luhmann tells us that autopoietic systems are closed to their environment. This requires some definitions and explanation. The difference between a system and its environment is a matter of complexity. The system is always less complex than its environment. The environment of a system includes such things as other systems, material forces and even individual people. For popular culture, other systems in the environment include economic systems, legal systems and other culture systems. Important material forces include technological advances, transportation developments, and regional infrastructure. Significant people include producers and consumers.

To say that the system is closed to the environment does not mean that systems are unaffected by their environment. A system that is closed to the environment means that the environment can affect the system in only two ways.

First, the environment is represented within the system in a simplified form. For example, individual people are represented as an 'audience.' Second, the environment affects the system through what Luhmann calls perturbations or disturbances. Even though an autopoietic system is closed to the environment, the environment must be allowed to disturb its inner representations. Without this, the system would be destroyed by environmental forces that would overwhelm it. For example, even though one of the primary determinates of the model of the audience is its ability to provide a rationalization for risky executive decisions, it still must have some relation to how actual consumers will behave. Otherwise, the organization will not survive in a competitive environment.

Internal representation is the key to the development of autonomous trends in the system, since the system reacts to its own representations (including perturbations) rather than the actual environment. This view of autonomy can be contrasted to the theory of analytic and concrete autonomy offered by Anne Kane. Analytic autonomy, as the name suggests, is an operation of the analyst. It is a conceptual effort that posits the "theoretical, artificial separation of culture from other social structures, conditions, and action" (Kane 1991: 54). The analyst separates out a distinct and stable semiotic system from the flux and interplay of insoluble concrete forces[9].

As a contrasting term to the analyst's construction of autonomy, Kane refers to concrete autonomy. Concrete autonomy is the historically specific investigation of the interconnections between the culture and the rest of social life. It is only because the analyst starts from the presumption of autonomy in the first step that these interconnections are seen as the relations between autonomous structures rather than seeing culture as simply a reflection of other, more fundamental, social structures. This two step definition of culture's autonomy is necessary because Kane accepts the anthropological definition of culture. With this imperialistic definition, the sociologist's first step must be to identify a delimited area of study, the analytic autonomy. However, using a more sociological definition of culture makes that step unnecessary since the cultural systems that we are studying construct their own autonomy in very concrete ways.

In the autopoietic model, the autonomy of the system is the accomplishment of the specific system. The first move in research is not the analyst's construction of analytic autonomy, but rather to observe networks of

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[9] For example, Kane's (2000) analysis of the Irish Land War begins with her construction of a semiotic system connecting 'land' and 'constitutional.' Since the analytic autonomy is the prerogative of the analyst, there is little need for Kane to provide an explanation for why she apparently understands this semiotic structure and the narratives that traverse it better than those who were actually embedded in the cultural context.

people in the process of constructing autonomy. The autopoietic model directs our observations to how the system accomplishes autonomy through its internal representations of its environment.

One way to frame the question of how the system accomplishes its inner representations is: What do systems see and how do they decide where to look? Since the system's internal representation is simpler than the actual environment, the system is always forced to select which characteristics of the environment are to be represented and which are to be ignored in the interest of simplicity. Being forced to select means contingency, since one could always select differently. Contingency means risk, because the system never has enough information to make the absolutely correct choice, since the interest in simplicity demands that some information be left unexamined. For instance, popular culture producers have been able to incorporate technological advances in electronics and computers. Consequently, there are now many popular culture producers who pay a great deal of attention to these areas. However, popular music was actually quite slow to adopt such instruments as synthesizers, seeing them as either not artistic or as too 'artsy' (Trocco, Pinch & Moog 2002). Furthermore, there may be other technological areas that hold promise for popular music (see for example, DNA music [Greenman 2001]) where popular music producers are not paying any attention.

Systems are autonomous because they respond to their own internal representations rather than the actual environment. Understanding cultural autonomy requires an analysis of how the system selects, simplifies and represents its environment.

Popular Culture Organizes its own Internal Structures

The third characteristic of autopoietic systems is that they organize their own internal structures. Luhmann refers to this as differentiation. Systems develop new subsystems and establish various relations between these subsystems in order to deal effectively with their environment. Differentiation increases the complexity of the system by allowing for specialization and various new interconnection between subsystems within the system. This creates a highly complex and dynamic internal environment[10].

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[10] Becker (1974: 7) warns us that, "nothing in the characteristics of any art makes one division of tasks more 'natural' than another." Consequently, an analysis of any particular structures should not be taken as a universal model of culture. Every particular culture system organizes its own internal structures, even such a seemingly natural division of labor as that between producer and receiver. Even though the division between producer and receiver is indispensable to understanding modern popular culture, it is much less relevant to folk cultures where producers and receivers are not marked as different categories and the roles are seen as temporary and interchangeable.

Differentiation within a system is a way of dealing with changes in the environment. Because systems depend on internal representations, they have limited 'views' of their environment. Differentiation allows subsystems to specialize in certain aspects of the environment. For example, popular music producers are going to be interested in technological advances affecting musical instrument construction (Chanan 1995). While consumers will only be interested to the extent that their favorite performer uses this new technology. Consequently, popular culture's production subsystem has specialized in 'scanning' the technological environment. Other subsystems, such as the consumption subsystem, will also 'see' this technology, but in a somewhat different frame. This affords a more complex representation of the environment.

The autopoietic model allows us to focus on the interconnections between the subsystems. While the sociology of culture has produced important studies of cultural production (Peterson & Anand 2004) and equally important studies of cultural consumption and use (Miller and McHoul 1998), the interconnection between the two have been left relatively unexamined. Part of the reason for this is the lack of an overarching theory that recognizes the different subsystems and is able to regard their relation as something besides causally determinative (e.g. seeing the consumption subsystem as the ideological reflection of the production subsystem) or as completely independent (seeing consumption as a free-floating and sovereign meaning-bestowing system). An autopoietic model can provide fresh insight into such classic problems as the relation between the intent of the cultural producer and the meaning of the receiver.

Unity of the System

As subsystems develop, the unity of the system becomes a problem. Luhmann suggests two ways in which a differentiated system maintains its unity: 1) shared communication media; and 2) shared code. For instance, in an economic system, the shared communication media is money. The different subsystems of the economic systems—banks, businesses, brokers, etc.—use money as their media of communication. In addition, they all use a shared code which, according to Luhmann, is payment/not payment. Everything that the economy is interested in can be represented in that code and those things that cannot be so represented are not part of the economy.

Most functionally differentiated systems use these codes to distinguish what belongs to the system and what does not. The same event can belong to different systems if the systems are able to represent the event in their particular code. For example, a laboratory experiment can be represented in the scientific

code of true or not true. However, it can also be seen as an economic event and represented in terms of its present costs and its potential for future payments. However, Luhmann (2000) points out that in art it is not so much the code (beautiful/not beautiful) as the art object itself that acts as a shared communication media to unify the system. At least in a modern art system, each art object appears to project its own conception of a code. An art object, by its very presence, seems to argue that good art should include such things as urinals, soup cans or comic strips. What holds the art system together is not the common ground on which arguments over beauty/not beauty are fought, but the art object itself as communicative media.

This also appears to be true for popular culture. The unity of the popular culture system is established by the popular culture object which circulates as a communicative media between the different subsystems. There is no unifying code. Each subsystem is free to develop its own code for the cultural object and one of the major problems of the subsystem is decoding and encoding the meaning of the object.

Circuit of Popular Culture: Decoding/Encoding

Popular culture has developed four subsystems: production, distribution, consumption and reproduction (Goodman forthcoming). The subsystems of the popular culture system are structured as a circuit (Du Gay 1997) and their primary relation to each other is as a coding and decoding of the popular culture object (Hall 1980). I will use the example of a popular music song to illustrate them.

Although the subsystems constitute a circuit, I begin with production. In the production stage, the emotions, experiences, biography, etc. of the popular culture artist are drawn upon to create a popular culture item. For example, a song would be written and performed. The next stage is the distribution of the popular culture item. For instance, the song may be distributed on a CD or played live at a local club. The third stage is consumption in which the popular culture item becomes meaningful for an audience. In our example, the song is listened to and understood to have a message, even if the message is nothing more than an invitation to enjoy this listening experience. The fourth stage is the reproduction of the popular culture item. The song may be sung in the shower, or a refrain may be quoted in conversation, or it may be 'covered' by a garage band. If the reproduction or aspects of it have the potential to pass the gatekeepers controlling entry to the distribution subsystem, it may become an instance of production and the circuit is complete.

Even though each subsystem has its specific organizational form, the agents in a particular subsystem must be able to use products that were created by the previous subsystem and to construct a product that is compatible with the forces in the next subsystem. Therefore, each subsystem is faced with the problem of decoding the messages from the previous subsystem and encoding messages for the next. Consequently, the meaning of messages in popular culture is neither determined by their producers nor freely interpreted by their receivers. Instead, the degree to which producers determine use in everyday life, or that the consumers' decisions to buy influences production, is an empirical question that can only be answered by looking at the actual existing forces in the different subsystems and the capacity of actors to decode and encode the meanings of the products.

The different subsystems' coding is one reason that the popular culture object is polysemic. It should be able to be an expression of the producer, a commodity for the distributor and a part of the consumer's identity. In addition, popular culture objects are intended to be reproduced in everyday life. The variety of contexts for their everyday use adds another level of polysemy.

Autopoietic Definition of Popular Culture

We are now ready to use our autopoietic model to define popular culture. I will begin by distinguishing popular culture from high and folk culture, then I will propose a definition of popular culture and its constituent subsystems.

Sociology's focus upon meaning as a defining characteristic of culture has led to an unfortunate set of confusions. Based upon the idea that culture is a pervasive web of meanings, popular culture is often contrasted with high culture and taken to be a synonym for folk culture. The autopoietic model suggests that the definition of what is popular culture should be based upon observations of the organizational characteristics of its subsystems.

Viewed organizationally, popular culture and high culture share many sociologically important characteristics. We should not be surprised to discover that the terms emerged together, with popular used primarily as a contrast to high culture (DiMaggio 1987). Like popular culture, high culture radically separates producers and consumers. This means that both high and popular culture must be centrally concerned with distribution. They both develop cultural products that are decontextualized and therefore polysemic and that are seen as property and must be purchased. Both popular culture and high culture encourage overproduction of cultural objects by producers and then use gatekeeping distribution systems to limit choices for the consumer. There are two main differences between high and popular culture: 1) gatekeeping in high culture involves a select cultural elite that

carry core values and norms of a specialized art world, whereas gatekeeping in popular culture involves purely commercial concerns; 2) high culture attempts to conjure up the specter of the sacred, while popular culture aims at everyday use.

The confusion between popular culture and folk culture is an even more serious impediment to an analysis of popular culture. In terms of social organization, there is little resemblance between the two. Popular culture radically separates producers and consumers, whereas in folk culture the distinction between producers and consumers are not marked, the roles either being anonymous or closely interrelated. Folk culture is only minimally concerned with distribution, while for popular culture, distribution is one of the major problems to which enormous organizational resources are devoted. Popular culture develops products that are decontextualized and therefore polysemic, while folk culture is firmly rooted in a social context that tends to provide it with a meaning that is bound by traditions. Finally, folk culture is seen as belonging to a community and is freely shared, while popular culture is a person's or corporation's property and must be purchased.

A definition of popular culture based upon the autopoietic concept of culture and consequently based upon an organizational analysis would be as follows: 1) producers and consumers are functionally separated; 2) it depends on mass distribution (even though it is often aimed at niche markets); 3) its subsystems are connected by cultural objects that are also commodities; 4) the object has the capacity to be used in everyday contexts; and 5) it consists of the four subsystems described below.

Production

Production in popular culture means the creation of a meaningful symbolic vehicle such as a song, movie, magazine, poster, etc. that can be sold as a commodity in a market. It would be wrong, however, to see the creation of the object as identical to the creation of its meaning. The meaning of the object is produced by different groups and individuals in each of the subsystems. This insight does not allow us to neglect the meaning that is conferred in the production stage, but even this meaning is related to the other stages since the intention of the producer is usually related to the producer's conception of the meanings that will be produced in the other stages. Since popular culture objects are made to be commodities, the producer will almost always have intended consumers who, it is hoped, will buy the objects. In addition, the producer will usually have an idea of the how the cultural objects will be distributed. The object's projected meanings for the distributor (e.g. as a money making asset) and for the audience (e.g. people

will love it and show it to their friends) affect the meanings that the producer invests in the object.

This idea of an autopoietic system fits neatly with one of the main sociological approaches to culture, the production perspective (Peterson 1976). The production perspective focuses on the organizational structures of cultural industries, especially market structures, reward structures, gatekeeping decisions and the careers and social structures of cultural producers and distributors (Peterson 1994). However, despite the label, sociologists working in the production approach rarely focus just on the production subsystem. Instead the production approach looks at the "processes of creation, manufacture, marketing, distribution, exhibiting, inculcation, evaluation, and consumption" (Peterson 1976:672), that is, it covers three out of four of the stages in my model. In fact, most of the studies in the production approach have focused on the relation between production and distribution. They therefore provide a strong argument for the type of clear analytical distinction between production and distribution that is used in this paper.

Distribution

Distribution includes everything between the item's production and its meaningful reception. It is what Hirsch (1972) called the cultural industry system and, as he recognized, the system not only distributes, but selects the cultural object. Consequently, distribution is the dominant subsystem in popular culture.

Although early studies of popular culture, especially reflection theory, ignored the role of distribution organizations, the production approach has made distribution one of its primary foci[11].8 In one of the early seminal papers in this approach, Hirsch (1978: 315) notes that, "organizations and media acting as cultural gatekeepers can be distinguished according to whether their primary role lies in the creation and production of ideas and symbols or in their distribution.". In the production approach, the two stages are usually distinguished by complexity and control. Production is a messy, complex, unpredictable process; while distribution runs (or, at least attempts to run) on a business model[12].

Consumption

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[11] The work that many regard as founding the production approach, Harrison and Cynthia White's (1965) Canvasses and Careers, demonstrates the radical effect that developments in the distribution stage can have on art. Their argument is that the emergence of impressionist art in France was associated with a breakdown of the distribution system based on small numbers of academically recognized artists. The breakdown of the old system led to a new distribution system based on art dealers and critics. This allowed for new, less-connected artists to emerge and encouraged a focus on individual works rather than an artist's oeuvre.

[12] As Di Maggio notes, this is a constant source of conflict. "Significant innovation must be carried out by personnel in creative divisions who, because of the difficulty of defining their work, present persistent challenges to management control" (1977).

Consumption is the stage in which the popular culture item that has been encoded to be distributed is now decoded to become meaningful. This decoding always involves a particular social context and usually involves ongoing discussions about the meaning (Lembo 2000, Lull 1998). The very idea of a popular culture item in a pluralistic culture implies that the object can be decoded in divergent ways. Items become popular because they allow space for divergent readings. Despite the possibilities for divergent readings, the subsystems' organized rules for interpretation allow the analyst to assume that there is an organizational logic that connects the encoding and the decoding.

Reproduction

The final stage is reproduction. Here the popular culture item is used in the everyday practices of the consumer. Lines from movies or refrains from songs are quoted for individual expression or for social effect. Movies provide topics of conversation in getting to know associates.

For most young people, popular culture items are used as the primary way for identifying commonalities and for making judgments about new acquaintances (Straw 1997).

In addition, as Murray Edelman (1985: 8) has pointed out, it is only at the stage of reproduction that cultural objects become politically effective. Cultural objects that are reproduced in everyday situations have the potential to subvert or to support.

In some cases, the reproduction of popular culture turns into a production and the circuit is completed. In fact, the principal difference between reproduction and production is that the latter is able to progress along the circuit, in other words, it can be marketed and consumed.

Research Topics

The autopoietic model directs research to the subsystems and especially their interactions. Some of the research questions of particular interest are the following: 1) the contribution of the subsystems to the constitution of popular culture objects; 2) how a subsystem achieves autonomy through its representation of its environment; 3) how the meanings of the cultural object are encoded and decoded by the different subsystems.

Perhaps of most interest, though, are research topics based upon the limits of the autopoietic model, and I will briefly outline an example. Although the unity of the system is based upon the popular culture object, the unity of the subsystems

are, like most systems, based upon their code. The dominant subsystem in popular culture is the distribution system which employs gatekeepers to control the producer's access to popular culture and market researchers to model and attempt to control consumers (Crane 1992). The code of the distribution system is an economic one of payment/non payment, in other words, what are the costs and potential profits of the popular culture object. This code influences the other subsystems, but each of the subsystems have their own code. Producers tend to see the popular culture object as expressive/not expressive of subjective experience. Consumers tend to see their purchase of the object in terms of identity/not identity. In other words, am I the kind of person that would own the cultural object?

The reproduction subsystem, however, is not governed by a unified code because it operates in the sphere of everyday life. As Habermas (1991) argues, this "lifeworld" cannot form an autopoietic system because of the diversity of codes and the pragmatic ambiguity of the communicative media. Despite this, the popular culture system is aimed at everyday life and the reproduction of its objects in everyday life is necessary because it provides the ground for further productions. This, consequently, is the point at which the system breaks down and necessitates repairs — for example, the increasingly onerous copyright laws attempting to control reproduction (Goodman forthcoming). To those who are so inclined, this breakdown of the system in its everyday reproduction may appear to be political resistance. However, the autopoietic model cautions us that this is a system vulnerability where various concerns can enter, but whether or not this everyday use is political and whether the political use is resistance or domination is a question that can only be answered through research.

In conclusion, the autopoietic model of culture provides us with a more sociological definition of culture. It provides fresh insights for such classic problems as the autonomy of culture and the relation between the producers' intent and the receivers' meanings. It offers fruitful areas for research projects and it gives us a new approach to the political effects of the everyday use of culture.

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The meanings of social life: a cultural sociology
By Jeffrey C. Alexander

Introduction
THE MEANINGS OF (SOCIAL) LIFE
On the Origins of a Cultural Sociology

Modern men and women go about their lives without really knowing why. Why do we work for such a long time every day? Why do we finish one war only to fight another? Why are we so obsessed with technology? Why do we live in an age of scandal? Why do we feel compelled to honor those, like the victims of the Holocaust, who have been murdered for an unjust cause?

If we had to explain these things, we would say "it just makes sense" or "it's necessary" or "it's what good people do." But there is nothing natural about any of this. People don't naturally do any of these things. We ate compelled to be this way.

We are not anywhere as reasonable or rational or sensible as we would like to think. We still lead lives dictated more by unconscious than conscious reason. We are still compelled by feelings of the heart and the fearful instincts of the gut.

America and its allies are waging today a war against terrorism. This is said to be necessary and rational, a means to attain the end of safety. Is the war against terrorism only this, or even primarily this? No, for it rests on fantasy as much as on fact. The effort to protect the people of the United States and Europe is shrouded in the rhetoric of good and evil, of friends and enemies, of honor, conscience, loyalty, of God and country, of civilization and primeval chaos. These are not just ideas. They are feelings, massive ones. Our leaders evoke these rhetorics in solemn tones, and we honor the victims of terrorism in the most rhetorical of benedictions.

These rhetorics are cultural structures. They are deeply constraining but also enabling at the same time. The problem is that we don't understand them. This is the task of a cultural sociology. It is to bring the unconscious cultural structures that regulate society into the light of the mind. Understanding may change but not dissipate them, for without such structures society cannot survive. We need myths if we are to transcend the banality of material life. We need narratives if we are to make progress and experience tragedy. We need to divide

the sacred from profane if we are to pursue the good and protect ourselves from evil.

Of course, social science has always assumed that men and women act without full understanding. Sociologists have attributed this to the force of social structures that are "larger" and more "powerful" than mere individual human beings. They have pointed, in other words, to the compulsory aspects of social life.

But what fascinates and frightens me are those collective forces that are not compulsory, the social forces to which we enthusiastically and voluntarily respond. If we give our assent to these, without knowing why, it is because of meaning. Materialism is not forced on us. It is also a romance about the sacrality of things. Technology is not only a means. It is also an end, a desire, a lust, a salvationary belief. People are not evil, but they are made to be. Scandals are not born from the facts but constructed out of them, so that we can purify ourselves. We do not mourn mass murder unless we have already identified with the victims, and this only happens once in a while, when the symbols are aligned in the right way.

The secret to the compulsive power of social structures is that they have an inside. They are not only external to actors but internal to them. They are meaningful. These meanings are structured and socially produced, even if they are invisible. We must learn how to make them visible. For Freud, the goal of psychoanalysis was to replace the unconscious with the conscious: "Where Id was. Ego shall be." Cultural sociology is a kind of social psychoanalysis. Its goal is to bring the social unconscious up for view. To reveal to men and women the myths that think them so that they can make new myths in turn.

In the middle 1980s, in the lunch line at the UCLA Faculty Center, I was engaging three sociology colleagues in a heated debate. An assistant professor was struggling for tenure, and the faculty were lining up pro and con. Those skeptical of the appointment objected that the candidate's work could not even be called sociology. Why not, I asked? He was not sociological, they answered: He paid more attention to the subjective framing and interpreting of social structures than to the nature of those social structures themselves. Because he had abandoned social-structural causality, he had given up on explanation, and thus on sociology itself. I countered: While his work was indeed different, it remained distinctly sociological. I suggested that it might possibly be seen as a kind of "cultural" sociology.

This remark did not succeed in its intended effect. Instead it generated a

kind of incredulity—at first mild snickers, then guffaws, and then real belly laughs. Cultural sociology? my colleagues scoffed. This idea struck them not only as deeply offensive to their disciplinary sense but intellectually absurd. The very phrase "cultural sociology" seemed an oxymoron. Culture and sociology could not be combined as adjective and noun. If there were a sociological approach to culture, it should be a sociology o/culture. There certainly could not be a cultural approach to sociology.

My colleagues were right about the present and the past of our discipline, but events did not prove them prescient about its future. In the last fifteen years, a new and specifically cultural approach to sociology has come into existence. It never existed before—not in the discipline's first hundred and fifty years. Nor has such a cultural approach been present in the other social sciences that have concerned themselves with modern or contemporary life.

In the history of the social sciences there has always been a sociology of culture. Whether it had been called the sociology of knowledge, the sociology of art, the sociology of religion, or the sociology of ideology, many sociologists paid respect to the significant effects of collective meanings. However, these sociologists of culture did not concern themselves primarily with interpreting collective meanings, much less with tracing the moral textures and delicate emotional pathways by which individuals and groups come to be influenced by chem. Instead, the sociology-of approach sought to explain what created meanings; it aimed to expose how the ideal structures of culture are formed by other structures—of a more material, less ephemeral kind.

By the mid-1980s, an increasing if still small number of social scientists had come to reject this sociology-of approach. As an enthusiastic participant in this rejection, I, too, accused sociology of basic misunderstanding, one that continues to hobble much of the sociological investigation into culture today, To recognize the immense impact of ideals, beliefs, and emotions is not to surrender to an (unsociological) voluntarism. It is not to believe that people are free to do as they will. It is not to lapse into the idealism against which sociology should indeed define itself, nor the wish-fulfilling moralism to which it is a welcome antidote. Cultural sociology can be as hardheaded and critical as materialistic sociology. Cultural sociology makes collective emotions and ideas central to its methods and theories precisely because it is such subjective and internal feelings that so often seem to rule the world. Socially constructed subjectivity forms the will of collectivities; shapes the rules of organizations; defines the moral substance of law; and provides the meaning and motivation for technologies, economies, and military machines.

But if idealism must be avoided, the facts of collective idealization must not be. In our postmodern world, factual statements and fictional narratives are densely interwoven. The binaries of symbolic codes and true/false statements are implanted one on the other. Fantasy and reality are so hopelessly intertwined that we can separate them only in a posthoc way. It was the same in modern society. In this respect, little has changed since traditional life. Classical and modern sociologists did not believe this to be true. They saw the break from the "irrationalities" of traditional society as radical and dichotomous. One needs to develop an alternative, more cultural sociology because reality is not nearly as transparent and rational as our sociological forefathers believed.

My sensitivity to this reality, and my ability to understand it, has been mediated by a series of critical intellectual events: the linguistic turn in philosophy, the rediscovery of hermeneutics, the structuralist revolution in the human sciences, the symbolic revolution in anthropology, and the cultural turn in American historiography. Behind all these contemporary developments has been the continuing vitality of psychoanalytic thinking in both intellectual and everyday life. It has been in response to these significant movements in our intellectual environment that the slow, uneven, but nevertheless steadily growing strand of a genuinely cultural sociology has developed.

These essays do not aim at building a new model of culture. They do not engage in generalizing and deductive theory. In this respect they are post-foundational. I see them, rather, to borrow from Merleau-Ponty, as adventures in the dialectics of cultural thought, They move back and forth between theorizing and researching, between interpretations and explanations, between cultural logics and cultural pragmatics. They enter into interpretive disputes with some of the exemplars of classical, modern, and postmodern thinking.

Even when they offer models and manifest generalizing ambitions—aiming toward science, in the hermeneutic sense—these essays are also rooted in pragmatic, broadly normative interests. As a chastened but still hopeful post—sixties radical, I was mesmerized by the Watergate crisis that began to shake American society in 1972. It showed me that democracy still lived and that critical thought was still possible, even in an often corrupted, postmodern, and still capitalist age. More fascinating still was how this critical promise revealed itself through a ritualized display of myth and democratic grandeur, a paradox I try to explain in chapter 6.

In the decade that followed this early political investigation, my interest turned to the newly revived concept of civil society. Over the same period, as my

understanding of the mythical foundations of democracy became elaborated more semiotically, I discovered that a deep, and deeply ambiguous, structure underlies the struggles for justice in democratic societies. When Philip Smith and I discuss the binary discourse of American civil society, in chapter 5, we show that combining Durkheim with Saussure demonstrates how the good of modern societies is linked to the evils, how democratic liberation has so often been tied to democratic repression. As I suggest in chapter 4, these considerations point us to a sociology of evil. Like every other effort to realize normative ideals, modernity has had a strong vision of social and cultural pollution and has been motivated to destroy it.

In chapter 2, I try to come to grips with the event that has been denned as the greatest evil of our time, the Holocaust. This evil is a constructed one, for it is not a fact that reflects modern reality but a collective representation that has constituted it. Transforming the mass murder of the Jews into an "engorged" evil has been fundamental to the expansion of moral universalism that marks the hopeful potential of our times, and it is paradigmatic of the way cultural traumas shape collective identities, for better and for worse.

Indeed, the very notion of "our times" can itself be construed as the creation of an ever-shifting narrative frame. It is with this in mind that in chapter 8 I offer a cultural-sociological approach to the venerable topic of intellectual ideology. Comparing intellectuals to priests and prophets, I bracket the reality claims that each of these groups of postwar intellectuals has made.

A similar commitment to relativizing the reality claims of intellectual-cum-political authority inspired chapter 7. When he first came to power, President Ronald Reagan embarked on the hapless quest to create an impregnable missile defense shield for the United States. Tens of billions of dollars were spent on this pursuit, which formed a backdrop to Soviet President Michael Gorbachev's suit to end the Cold War. While personally resistant to President Reagan's claims, sociologically I was fascinated by them. To understand their mythical roots, I have tried to reconstruct technology in a fundamentally cultural-sociological way.

But more than pragmatic-political and scientific-empirical interests have guided me in approaching the topics in this book. My aim has always also been theoretical. By applying the cultural-sociological method to a widely dispersed range of topics, I wish to demonstrate that culture is not a thing but a dimension, not an object to be studied as a dependent variable but a thread that runs through, one that can be teased out of, every conceivable social form. These essays enter into thick description. They tease out overarching grand narratives. They build

maps of complex symbolic codes. They show how the fates of individuals, groups, and nations are often determined by these invisible but often gigantically powerful and patterned ideational rays.

Yet, at the same time, these investigations also pay careful attention to the "material factor" — that terrible misnomer — in its various forms: to the interests of racial, national, class, religious, and party-political groups; to capitalist economic demands; to the deracinating pressures of demography, the centralizing forces of bureaucracy, and the geopolitical constrictions of states. Such "hard" structural factors are never ignored; they are, rather, put into their appropriate place. Once again: To engage in cultural sociology is not to believe that good things happen or that idealistic motives rule the world. To the contrary, only if cultural structures are understood in their full complexity and nuance can the true power and persistence of violence, domination, exclusion, and degradation be realistically understood.

With the exception of the programmatic first chapter, written also with Philip Smith, I have tried not to overload these essays with theoretical disquisition. Some orienting abstraction there certainly must be. Yet in selecting the essays to be included in this book, and in editing them, my goal has been to make the theoretical ideas that inspire cultural sociology live through the empirical discussions, the social narratives, the case studies. In fact, from several of these chapters I have expunged large chunks of theoretical discussion that accompanied them in their originally published forms. Much of my academic life has been devoted to writing "pure theory." This book is different. Its purpose is to lay out a research program for a cultural sociology and to show how this program can be concretely applied to some of the principal concerns of contemporary life.

A great aporia marks the birth of sociology — a great, mysterious, and unexplained rupture. It concerns the relation between religion and rationality, tradition and modernity. The extraordinary German founder of sociology, Max Weber, devoted a large part of his maturity to the historical-comparative study of world religions. He showed that the human desire for salvation became patterned in different ways, that each difference contained a practical ethic, and that these ethics, carried on the wings of salvation, had enormous impact on the social organization of practical life. With the other part of his energetic maturity, however, Weber devoted himself to laying out the concepts of a much more materialistic economic and political sociology, one that emphasized instrumental motives and domination, not ideas about salvation and moral ethics. Weber never explained how these two parts of his work could be reconciled. Instead he finessed the issue by suggesting, via his rationalization thesis, that faith was relevant only to the creation of modernity, not to the project of its ongoing institutionalization.

We must go beyond this disconnect, which has merely been replicated by more contemporary theories of social life. If we are to understand how the insights of Weber's religion-soziologie can be applied to the nonreligious domains of secular society, we need a cultural sociology. Only by understanding the nature of social narrative can we see how practical meanings continue to be structured by the search for salvation. How to be saved—how to jump to the present from the past and into the future—is still of urgent social and existential concern. This urgency generates fantasies and myths and inspires giant efforts at practical transformation. We must respectfully disagree with Weber's contention that modernity has forced charisma to become routinized in a fateful and permanent way.

It is striking that the French founder of modern sociology, Emile Durkheim, suffered from a similar theoretical affliction. There is a great divide between Durkheim's early and middle studies of social structure on the one hand and the symbolic and ritual studies that occupied his later work on the other. Durkheim called this later work his "religious sociology," and he promised that his study of Aboriginal societies. The Elementary Forms of Religious Life, would be the beginning, not the end, of exploration of society's symbolic dimensions. Was it Durkheim's premature death or some more fundamental ideological or theoretical inhibition that prevented him from fulfilling this promise, from demonstrating the continuity between the religion of early societies and the cultural life of later, more complex ones? If the love of the sacred, the fear of pollution, and the need for purification have continued to mark modern as much as traditional life, we can find out how and why only by following a cultural-sociological path.

In the history of social science, the "friends of culture" have tended to be conservative. They have betrayed a nostalgia for the organicism and the solidity of traditional life. The idea of a cultural sociology has foundered on this yearning, on the idea that only in simple, religiously ordered, undemocratic, or old-fashioned societies do myths and narratives and codes play a fundamental role. These essays demonstrate the opposite. Reflection and criticism are imbedded in myths that human beings cannot be entirely reflective and critical about. If we understand this, we can separate knowledge from power and not become only a servant to it.

The Sociology of Culture
in Computer-Mediated Communication:
An Initial Exploration

By Elizabeth Lane Lawley

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
LS695 Seminar in Research Design

April 1994

Right now, all we have on the Net is folklore, like the Netiquette that old-timers try to teach the flood of new arrivals, and debates about freedom of expression versus nurturance of community. About two dozen social scientists, working for several years, might produce conclusions that would help inform these debates and furnish a basis of validated observation for all the theories flying around. A science of Net behavior is not going to reshape the way people behave online, but knowledge of the dynamics of how people do behave is an important social feedback loop to install if the Net is to be self-governing at any scale.

--Howard Rheingold (1993)

Introduction

Most studies of computer-mediated communication (CMC) have focused on conceptions of the technology as a tool, rather than as a constructed environment. This is not surprising, given that the bulk of research about computing in general has taken this tool-oriented approach. A few researchers have turned to anthropological and sociological theories to study individual interactions in a "culture of computing," and have found these theories to be particularly useful in better understanding the impact of computer technology on human behavior and interaction (Sproull & Kiesler, 1991; Sproull, Kiesler, & Zubrow, 1984). This direction has particular relevance in the study of CMC. In fact, popular discussions of CMC activity already commonly incorporate the ideas of "virtual" culture and community. (Cisler, 1992; Rheingold, 1993; Tyckson, 1992; Von Rospaq, 1991)

While the door has been opened to the study of CMC in a cultural context, little has been done to ground this study in a theoretical base of anthropological or sociological research on culture. To that end, I intend to examine the potential applicability of the work of Pierre Bourdieu in the sociology of culture--work which has been widely cited in recent years in the fields of anthropology, sociology, philosophy, and communication--and propose a project of study to analyze CMC

using Bourdieu's theoretical model. One group of authors described Bourdieu's program as a "study of the conditions of production of academic knowledge, technical expertise, and bureaucratic power in contemporary France." (Postone, LiPuma, & Calhoun, 1993) This paper attempts to provide a justification for substituting the milieu of "cyberspace" for that of contemporary France in Bourdieu's theoretical model.

In her paper "Appropriating Bourdieu: Feminist Theory and Pierre Bourdieu's Sociology of Culture" (1991), Toril Moi defines the process of appropriation as "a critical assessment of a given theory formation with a view to taking it over and using it for feminist purposes." In that same sense, I hope to appropriate Bourdieu for the purpose of structuring a research program on the social and cultural aspects of computer-mediated communication.

In order to show the applicability of Bourdieu's theories to the study of CMC and related information networks, I will first discuss the justification for defining CMC environments as culture, go on to provide an overview of Bourdieu's theoretical project, and then examine the tasks that must be undertaken in order to utilize Bourdieu's constructs in exploring and understanding that culture. I will conclude with an assessment of the viability and usefulness of such a research project.

Computer-Mediated Communication as Culture

For the purposes of this research, I define computer-mediated communication as the process of sending messages--primarily, but not limited to text messages--through the direct use by participants of computers and communication networks. By restricting the definition to the direct use of computers in the communication process, I eliminate 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.

In his recent book *The Virtual Community* (1993), Howard Rheingold lays out the aspects of computer-mediated communication over bulletin boards and

other computer conferencing networks (including, but not limited to, the Internet) that have led him to consider that medium as constituting communities, and beyond that, culture. Rheingold says "Most people who get their news from conventional media have been unaware of the wildly varied assortment of new cultures that have evolved in the world's computer networks over the past ten years." (p. 4) He is not the only one to use the term culture in describing the experiences and interactions of CMC participants. However, like many others who use the term, he fails to link his characterization to a theoretical construct of what constitutes a culture--as opposed to a community, a society, or a subculture, for example.

Defining "culture," however, is no small task. A first step toward this end, checking the definition of culture in the *American Heritage Dictionary* (1992), yields several meanings that could be considered in the context of social research. The primary definition reads:

1.a. The totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought. b. These patterns, traits, and products considered as the expression of a particular period, class, community, or population. c. These patterns, traits, and products considered with respect to a particular category, such as a field, subject, or mode of expression.

This is the definition of culture usually assumed in social scientific analysis. And this definition is what informs the academic field of anthropology, particularly cultural anthropology, the discipline most likely to be cited when the idea of "studying culture" is introduced. Other definitions of culture as provided by the dictionary focus on the concept of culture as a selective slice of intellectual or artistic activity, or on the process of obtaining knowledge of these areas; these issues will be explored more fully in the discussion of Bourdieu's version of cultural studies.

The dictionary defines anthropology itself as "The scientific study of the origin, the behavior, and the physical, social, and cultural development of human beings." Freilich (1989), in his introduction to a collection of essays on the relevance of culture as a concept, states that "culture, just recently, was the central, integrating idea in anthropology, a construct which gave anthropology a distinctive personality within the social sciences." (p. 1) And Kapferer (1987) tells us that "Anthropology's focus on culture structures the discourse of its practitioners and their relations with other scholars. The breadth and variation of human culture tends to define the bounds of anthropology." As a starting point for defining culture in the context of CMC, a review of introductory literature in anthropology therefore

was in order. At the very least, such a review seemed likely to yield a working definition of culture as used by anthropologists in their research. However, a first look at this literature sheds little light on the topic. While the term "culture" is used liberally in anthropology texts, it is seldom defined in a clear or consistent fashion. In addition, like many other social sciences, anthropology is in the midst of shift in paradigms from the positivistic to the more subjective. This necessarily has an effect upon the stability of definitions of concepts such as culture and society. Two definitions drawn from anthropology textbooks show the range of meanings attributed to the word.

(1)

Culture. . . is variously defined as a worldwide striving toward "civilization" through the accumulation of practices and beliefs; a unique pattern of beliefs that shapes personalities in each society; a local system of ideas and practices that are functionally integrated; an unconscious structure that generates ideas and behavior; a system of shared symbols that come into play in social interactions; and a system by which people adapt to their environment. (Miller, 1979, p. 9)

One troublesome aspect of this definition is its deterministic phrasing; culture itself is said to "shape personalities in each society," and to "generate ideas and behavior," rather than being a concept shaped by personalities, or generated through the exercise of ideas and behavior. One is forced to ask how this structure is itself generated.

Another textbook gives a different view of the term:

(2)

Culture: The nongenetic or learned ways in which humans adapt. The learning and sharing involved in culture means that it can be equated with tradition and examined as history as well as adaptation. The interrelatedness or wholeness of culture also means that anthropology may make use of methods from the humanities to illustrate this major concept. (Schusky & Culbert, 1978, p. 216)

In this definition, the emphasis is on culture as process, but with little specificity. Are we to take this to mean that all learning and adaptation constitutes "culture"? If so, the concept of culture is so broad as to be almost meaningless in the context of social studies.

Each of the above authors is quick to note that the multiplicity of definitions of culture that occur in anthropological literature are what provide the field with its depth and richness of interpretation. However, this lack of specificity in defining the

clear boundaries of "culture" makes it possible to appropriate the term--and many of the associated theories--for research that may not fall within the more traditional boundaries of anthropology.

The study of culture, in fact, has not been limited to the field of anthropology. The ambiguity of the concept, and its shifting boundaries, have led to the development of "cultural studies" that span a range of social scientific fields, ranging from sociology to communication. Reviewing the literature of some of these fields yields another set of definitions, these somewhat easier to apply in the context of studying computer-mediated communication. For example Hannerz (1992), while relating the study of culture back to anthropology, expands the definition of the phenomenon being studied:

[I]n the recent period, culture has been taken to be above all a matter of meaning. To study culture is to study ideas, experiences, feelings, as well as the external forms that such internalities take as they are made public, available to the senses and thus truly social. For culture, in the anthropological view, is the meanings which people create, and which create people, as members of societies. Culture is in some way collective. (p. 3)

This conception of culture as a collective creation of meaning is echoed by Douglas (1989), who begins her discussion of the role of the individual in the operation of economic theory by stating that "Culture is nothing if not a collective product," (p. 38). In fact, a growing number of social theorists, many of them with their academic "home" not just in anthropology, but also in fields ranging from sociology and communications to economics and political science, are developing and utilizing definitions of culture that depend far more on the constructed meanings generated by collective action than on any external definition of boundaries.

The idea of culture as collectively constructed meanings has its roots in the current paradigm shift in the social sciences. This shift, from an objectively oriented, positivistic approach to a subjectively oriented, relativistic approach, has been as significant in the field of cultural studies as in any other branch of social science research. Alexander (1990), in his introduction to a book summarizing current debates on culture and society, says that "Culture is the 'order' corresponding to meaningful action. Subjective, antimechanistic order is conceived of as followed for voluntary reasons rather than because of necessity in the mechanistic, objective sense." (p. 2) The book itself provides an interesting view of how cultural studies is currently developing as a field, since it sets out to examine debates over the nature of culture *and* society, and breaks down perspectives on

the study and meaning of culture according to sociological rather than anthropological traditions--including functionalist, Durkheimian, Marxist, poststructuralist, and other perspectives. This blurring of the lines between anthropological and sociological study is significant in the cultural studies field, and allows those studying collective behavior to take a more holistic view, one that does not force a separation between the study of social activity and social organization.

It is in this opening provided by the introduction of sociological perspectives into the study of culture that we find the work of Pierre Bourdieu, a sociologist whose work focuses on the concept of culture, and whose research has included a great deal of fieldwork in the anthropological tradition. Kapferer (1987), in discussing the changes taking place in the anthropological perspective on culture, says that "the trend is toward the cultural as constitutive, not in the form of 'value orientations' or guides or 'models' for action, but as finely ingrained in what Bourdieu calls habitus, or the habituated practices of human beings." (p. ix)

Bourdieu's program of study, often referred to as the "sociology of culture," moves away from the traditional definitions of culture used in anthropology, drawing more on subsidiary definitions of culture such as those provided by the *American Heritage Dictionary*:

2. Intellectual and artistic activity, and the works produced by it;
3.a. Development of the intellect through training or education.
b. Enlightenment resulting from such training or education;
4. A high degree of taste and refinement formed by aesthetic and intellectual training;
5. Special training and development.

In his article on Bourdieu's cultural sociology, Sulkunen (1982) says that:

Contrary to his British counterparts, the Birmingham school of cultural sociology (which adopts a 'wide' definition of culture as a totality of meaningful practices constituting a way of life), Bourdieu defines culture narrowly as 'the best that has been thought and said, regarded as the summits of achieved civilization.' (Hall 1870:59)

Sulkunen goes on to qualify this definition of culture as "that which is *defined* as such by the *dominant classes*.," a critical aspect of Bourdieu's interpretation of culture. In fact, Bourdieu uses the term culture to refer solely to this aspect of civilization--achievements defined as "the best" by the dominant class. To describe the "meaningful practices constituting a way of life," he has

developed his own terminology, allowing a degree of specificity not achievable in the current lexicon of anthropology. To determine the usefulness of Bourdieu's ideas about culture and society in the context of CMC, we must look carefully at his terminology and constructs.

Theoretical Constructs in Bourdieu's Sociology of Culture

In order to understand the potential applicability of Bourdieu's theories to the study of computer-mediated communication and its virtual environments, it is necessary to first understand the constructs underlying the theories. I will briefly review some of those constructs, setting the stage for an analysis of how those constructs can be utilized in this particular research context.

Bourdieu's model of society and social relations has its roots in Marxist theories of class and conflict. Bourdieu characterizes social relations in the context of what he calls the *field*, defined as a competitive system of social relations functioning according to its own specific logic or rules. The field is the site of struggle for power between the dominant and subordinate classes. It is within the field that legitimacy--a key aspect defining the dominant class--is conferred or withdrawn. That legitimacy is conferred in the form of symbolic capital, discussed below. Moi (1991) quotes Bourdieu as defining the field in this way: "A space in which a game takes place, a field of objective relations between individuals or institutions who are competing for the same stake." (p. 1021) That stake is the amassing of capital, in order to ensure the reproduction of the individual's or institution's class.

Rather than using his concept of field as a substitute for the traditional concept of culture, Bourdieu sees everyday life as consisting of not one but a conglomeration of fields, including leisure, family patterns, consumption, work, artistic practices, and others. (Sulkunen, 1982, p. 106-7) The dominant class in each of these fields may vary in its composition, but the process of struggle for capital, and through the amassing capital for dominance, is consistent in each.

Another key concept in Bourdieu's theories is that of *habitus*, which he defines as the "system of acquired dispositions functioning on the practical level as categories of perception and assessment or as classificatory principles as well as being the organizing principles of action." (Bourdieu, 1987/1990) The habitus is an individually operationalized set of expectations and understandings based on the collection of experiences a given individual encounters that shape his or her sense of the "rules of the game." It is what regulates interactions within a field in an observable, "objective" manner, affecting not only the individual but all those who

interact with that individual. According to Sulkunen (1982), "habitus of a group or class defines a symbolic order within which it conducts its practices--in every day life as well as in the feast." (p. 108) One of the most powerful aspects of the concept of the habitus is that is both subjectively constructed and objectively put into practice, helping social scientists to bridge the gap between subjective and objective sociological theories.

In his discussions of both field and habitus, Bourdieu rejects the sociological concept of functionalism, arguing that social forms are *not* generally determined by needs for survival or integration. The field and the habitus can (and do) vary substantially over time and geographic boundaries; while the processes of class struggle and symbolic action may remain consistent, the forms that these activities take varies not based on functional determinants, but on seemingly arbitrary social constructions.

While the field and habitus describe, respectively, the environment and rules within which class struggles take place, the concept of symbolic capital defines the tools used by individuals and institutions within a field to gain dominance and thus to reproduce themselves over time. It is in this area that Bourdieu both draws most strongly from Marxist ideas of class and conflict, and also breaks most clearly from the classical Marxist constructions. Rather than defining capital purely in Marx's economic terms, Bourdieu defines two primary types of symbolic capital: economic and cultural. Both describe endowments that individuals bring with them into the field and attempt to augment. Economic capital is equivalent to the capital familiar to students of Marxist theories including both monetary and property assets. Cultural capital, however, is a concept unique to Bourdieu's theoretical model. This is where Bourdieu's use of the narrower definition of culture comes into play. Cultural capital can also be described as cultural competence. Like economic capital, it conveys legitimacy, and a legitimacy regulated by institutions within the society. In the case of cultural capital, that legitimacy is regulated not by the government but by educational and artistic institutions.

Cultural capital can be converted into economic capital, just as economic capital can be converted into cultural capital. however, these conversions happen at different rates of exchange. Economic capital is more liquid, and more easily transferable from generation to generation, making it particularly useful in continuing the process of reproducing class legitimacy and domination over time. Cultural capital, however, also functions as a major factor in class definition. In order to maintain the legitimacy of cultural capital, and to ensure both its convertibility and its ability to reproduce itself, the educational system creates a

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market in cultural capital with certificates as the currency. (Garnham & Williams, 1990)

The real significance of capital in Bourdieu's theoretical model is the role that it plays in the continuing struggle between the dominating and the dominated classes. It is through the acquisition of capital, and the use of symbolic capital to perpetrate symbolic violence, that classes ensure their own legitimacy and reproduction. Like Marx, Bourdieu believes that the more this process of symbolic violence is hidden from sight and left unchallenged, the more powerful it is in reproducing class dominance. Thus, when we take as an absolute given that individuals with advanced degrees are best qualified to teach in universities, and do not challenge the assumptions behind that assertion, we leave power structures unchanged and allow the continuation of the symbolic violence that Bourdieu calls "pedagogic action." (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 5)

Bourdieu has not limited his work to theoretical construction. Rather, he has demonstrated a commitment to integrating the processes of ethnographic study and development of theoretical models, arguing that each process depends upon, and informs, the other. One of the more interesting applications of his theoretical constructs is provided in his book *Homo Academicus* (1984/1988), an examination of academia in modern France. This study of pedagogy in action, and in particular its analysis of the exchanges of symbolic capital and power in the field of higher education, serves as an excellent blueprint for designing a cultural and sociological study of CMC. It is this work that I will use as a model for a preliminary assessment of how Bourdieu's theoretical constructs can be applied in the context of CMC.

Bourdieu's Constructs in Computer-Mediated Communication

Bourdieu begins *Homo Academicus* with a discussion of the particular problems inherent in studying one's own environment--in his case, academia. He discusses the epistemological challenges involved in "*breaking* with inside experience and then in reconstituting the knowledge which has been obtained by means of this break" (p. 1). He also discusses the self-reflexiveness of this process, noting that "When research comes to study the very realm within which it operates, the results which it obtains can be immediately reinvested in scientific work as instruments of reflexive knowledge of the conditions and social limits of this work" (p. 15). Most importantly, though, he justifies the undertaking of such an introspective project, claiming that "We have every reason to think that the research has less to gain, as regards the scientific quality of his work, from looking into the interests of others, than from looking into his own interests, from understanding what he is motivated to see and not to see." (p. 16) This discussion

is important in the context of the proposed study of CMC environments, since as an active participant in these environments, I must acknowledge my "insider" role as necessarily informing my perspective on any research undertaken.

In order to apply Bourdieu's theories to the context of CMC, it is necessary first to clearly define the boundaries of the potential field (and possibly subfields), classes, habitus, and symbolic capital that exist in--and therefore define--that context. This task is not a small one; there is much debate over the boundaries of the CMC environment, and its dependence on quickly changing technologies muddies those boundaries further. What I attempt to do here is merely to propose working definitions for these concepts; definitions that will need to be tested through empirical observations and analysis of the CMC environments in question. In fact, one of the strengths of Bourdieu's theoretical model is its emphasis on the use of empirical observation to support hypotheses and to feed back into the theoretical model.

Defining the field itself provides the initial challenge in this process, as there are two distinct ways to envision the field in the CMC environment. The first is to see each CMC-based system as a separate field; thus, the Internet might make up one field, Usenet another, FidoNet a third. One difficulty with this definition is determining the boundaries of a given system; for example, a single PC-based BBS might incorporate Usenet newsgroups, FidoNet messages, and local discussion topics. The second is to see all CMC media as making up a single field, with individual CMC systems as subfields within that field. This definition is certainly more practical for the purposes of doing research; the question is, will this definition operationalize effectively in the context of Bourdieu's theoretical constructs? Again, turning to *Homo Academicus*, it is useful to note that Bourdieu uses the term field in many contexts--referring to the field of the university (p. 29), as well as to those of the arts and social science faculties. It appears that Bourdieu's definition of field is fluid enough to incorporate overlap, allowing us to see individual CMC systems such as Usenet or the Internet as fields in their own right while still permitting the definition of a field encompassing all such media.

What will ultimately justify the definition of the field is the consideration of the subsidiary constructs of class, habitus, and capital, which must be consistent within a field. It is in this area that the most tentative mappings must be made, for these concepts must be validated with empirical evidence gathered through observation and interaction.

Classes within the larger context of CMC appear to be defined in terms of expertise and experience with CMC (particularly in the field of given CMC system),

and through affiliation with particular CMC systems (more likely when viewing CMC systems en masse as a single field). Having a "history" on the network places individuals in positions of authority, from which they often then feel they have the authority to dictate how current practices of communication should operate. In many ways, this pattern of interaction is similar to that found in small and less industrialized societies, where authority is passed down through the elders of a group, and tradition defines most patterns of interaction. This authority, in fact, results from the accumulation over time of cultural capital, a key concept in Bourdieu's model of interaction and cultural reproduction. While the authority is not represented in a system as formal as that of the degree granting or promotion and tenure systems of academia, like academia, it tends to reward both seniority and celebrity.

Also affecting class distinction, particularly on multi-network CMC media such as the Internet or Usenet, is the affiliation of an individual with a particular "home" system. Thus, users with accounts on well-established systems such as the Well, or those with accounts at prestigious research universities are likely to be accorded more status in the field than those on such commercial systems as Delphi or America Online, or hobbyist systems such as FidoNet. However, within each of these systems, there are also class distinctions, again often based on the concept of cultural capital within that system; this supports the idea that the field in CMC can be conceptualized as either the individual system or the interrelated systems as a whole; in each case, class and capital are conceptualized differently, but share similar characteristics.

While CMC was a relatively unusual mode of communication, frequented by only an elite subsection of computer users, economic capital played a minor role in allowing entrance into the field, and almost no role in determining power and status within the field. It is possible to identify a two key participant groups that formed the population of CMC environments. These included computer scientists and other researchers associated with early networking projects such as the ARPANet, a group that served as the original population of what we now call the Internet; computer hobbyists or "hackers," who frequented bulletin board systems and other grass roots computer networks (such as FidoNet), as well as those responsible for building and maintaining early computer systems and networks. Another identifiable thread in the CMC user population was that of 1960s-style "counterculture" activists, many of whom recognized early on the power of CMC networks for grass-roots organizing and redefinition of community. While the first of these groups, the scientific research community, did wield some economic power,

both of the other groups accumulated capital almost exclusively in its cultural rather than economic form.

The economic power wielded by the scientific community did enable them to implement and enforce many of the early power structures in CMC environments. For example, on the ARPANet, the precursor to the Internet, restrictions limiting participation by those not in the scientific community were actively enforced. Even now, the backbone of the United States portion of the Internet, which is funded (and therefore controlled by the National Science Foundation, restricts use of network facilities for certain purposes (primarily commercial) through the "Acceptable Use Policy." This policy is an excellent example of the use of symbolic power to control the activity of other participants in the field.

Cultural capital, in the form of expertise and experience using CMC or through affiliation with a "high status" system, is also used regularly to impose restrictions on other members of the field. New users of CMC systems are regularly ridiculed or attacked for shows of ignorance or inexperience; reactions of the dominant cultural class range from patronizing to hostile, and often are sufficient to drive new participants who do not exhibit sufficient acquisition of this cultural capital out of the field entirely.

The most problematic of Bourdieu's concepts to define in the context of CMC is that of habitus, particularly since habitus, by its very definition, is the most subjective of the constructs Bourdieu provides. What may be most useful in defining the habitus of CMC participants is an examination of CMC terminology. The linguistic conventions we use to describe and define phenomena are themselves creations of the pedagogical process, and are constantly informed by our cultural assumptions--or habitus. It is interesting to note that computer and communication technology, more so than most technologies, has developed its own extensive and unique lexicon. Bookstores shelves are full of computer dictionaries and glossaries, books on computers devote large sections to definitions of terms and jargon, and it is not unusual for technically sophisticated computer users to find themselves "translating" jargon for less sophisticated users. Yet this phenomenon does not appear in conjunction with technologies such as telephony, radio, or television; while their underlying mechanics may be as mystifying as those of computers, linguistic conventions emphasizing the complexity or difference of those systems have not arisen as they have in the context of computers.

Among the terms unique to CMC interaction, and providing insight into the habitus of participants, are such words as netiquette, flaming, and newbie. "Netiquette" refers to the often unwritten but communally enforced rules governing appropriate behavior in CMC interaction. While a few guides to these network "rules of the road" have been compiled and electronically distributed (Rinaldi, 1992; Templeton, 1991; Von Rospaq, 1991), they are seldom made available to new users, who tend to learn the rules by breaking them and being reprimanded. "Flaming" is responding in a hostile or highly critical way to a user who has been perceived as violating these norms of CMC behavior. And "newbie" is a term used, often in a denigrating manner, to describe new and unsophisticated users of CMC systems.

The fact that so many terms have been developed in the CMC environment to describe the implementation and violation of behavioral norms is an indication of the importance of the habitus, which Bourdieu sees as the individually operationalized but collectively effective method for the regulation of behavior within the field.

This preliminary investigation of the applicability of Bourdieu's theoretical constructs of field, class, habitus, and symbolic capital and power appears to support the definition of CMC as a legitimate field (or fields), and to justify closer analysis of this environment. Ideally, such research will yield significant insight not only into the current nature of interaction in CMC, but also into its likely future as patterns of capital distribution change and the field both expands and matures. By making a case for the suitability of this theoretical model in studying the CMC environment, this paper only sets the stage for a larger program of research. This research will need to incorporate empirical studies of a variety of CMC systems (which can be seen as subfields of the larger CMC field) in order to test the validity of the constructs, identify more clearly the classes interacting in the field, and to define in more precise terms the symbolic capital (especially cultural) being used by these classes to exert power and ensure their continuing survival.

While this discussion of Bourdieu's costructs in the context of CMC may seem sketchy, it is because the research being proposed is, in fact, the development of a substantially more in-depth model of the symbolic power and practice exercised in CMC, and the potential of Bourdieu's theories in both understanding current practices and anticipating future changes in the cultural milieu.

In keeping with Bourdieu's example of combining theory with practice, my research will require close observation of CMC interactions and participants in

order to both validate the constructs outlined here, and to attempt to predict future trends in the use of symbolic power and action by classes within that field. Only by ensuring that the theoretical work is informed by field research can these constructs be made useful for understanding behavior and predicting trends in the use of this increasingly ubiquitous medium. Toward that end, I expect the research to consist of a reflexive process of developing theoretical constructs, verifying those constructs through observation of interaction in CMC contexts, and then reforming constructs based on observed interactions.

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Journal article

Intercultural and Cross-Cultural Communication Research: Some Reflections about Culture and Qualitative Methods

Maria Assumpta Aneas & Maria Paz Sandin

Abstract: This article attempts to offer a response, from a general perspective, to the question of how culture reveals itself in the application of qualitative research methods in intercultural communication. When we use the term "culture" it is

important to bear in mind that culturally attributed social interaction processes are themselves the result of socially constructed processes. They are part of an individual-collective dialectic with multiple potential meanings, which are emergent and in constant reformulation from a wide variety of social and cultural perspectives. Much of the recent research in intercultural communication has been directed towards the study of these systems of culturally related meanings. The literature we review offers perspectives from a variety of disciplines and insights into the role of culture in communication processes.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

In this article we will address the question of how culture is conceptualized and manifests itself in the application of qualitative methodology. With this objective we attempt to summaries contributions from the field of intercultural and crosscultural communication which we feel may be of help in moving towards the necessary conceptualization. It is also hoped that the arguments here reviewed will enable us to analyze, from a general perspective, the relationship between culture and some of the most significant components of qualitative research. [1]

First, the role of culture in intercultural communication is examined. We offer a concise presentation of the history of cross-cultural and intercultural communication as a research field, and then continue by offering an outline of the

basic idea of culture as it is applied in studies of intercultural communication. We introduce to some approaches which are currently used in studying culture. Then we outline how cultural research and qualitative research intersect conceptually. [2]

The next section, which is dedicated to the analysis of empirical reality in qualitative research, is mainly focused on the role played by culture in the information gathering process. In particular, and using a very generic approach, some theoretical contributions are presented which illustrate the role that culture plays in determining the content of the information which is assembled, the interpersonal climate which is established, and the language through which the world of facts is approached. The section does not examine specific techniques or strategies but rather it identifies some elements which may influence the way culture enters and influences the research process. The section also includes the relation between culture and the processes of analyzing and interpreting reality, and offers a brief summary of some of the principal theoretical approaches applied for analyzing culture and their backflow on the research practice in an intercultural context. [3]

At this point we would like to emphasize the necessarily generic character of the present work, since the complexity and the theoretical richness which underlie the concepts "culture" and "qualitative research" would really justify the writing of a separate article for each of the sections we present here. Thus, accepting the risk of offering, at times, what some might consider a rather superficial account, we have tried to outline a more general framework from which the conceptualization of culture and its relations with the process of qualitative research in the context of intercultural communication may be addressed. [4]

2. The Role of Culture in Researching Intercultural Communication

2.1 A brief history of the field of intercultural communication research

Intercultural communication is a scientific field whose object of interest is the interaction between individuals and groups from different cultures, and which examines the influence of culture on who people are, how they act, feel, think and, evidently, speak and listen (DODD, 1991). As described by VILA (2005), intercultural communication may be defined as a communicative process involving individuals from reference cultures which are sufficiently different to be perceived as such, with certain personal and/or contextual barriers having to be overcome in order to achieve effective communication. Even if the origins of the study of intercultural communication can be situated in the years following the end of World

War II, and coincide with the creation of the United Nations (1945), it is generally accepted that Edward T. HALL (1959) was the first to use the term itself[13]. Most of the work which was carried out in the 1960s and 1970s was very much under HALL's influence, together with that of KLUCKHOHN and STRODTBECK (1961). During the 1970s the field flourished, and the most notable works were possibly that of CONDON and YOUSEF (1977), as well as SAMOVAR, PORTER and JAIN (1981) who were the first researchers to systematize the area of investigation. During the 1980s and 1990s publications were focused on deepening the outreach of theory and on refining the applied methodology (CHEN & STAROSTA, 1998). [5]

LOMAS, OSORIO and TUSYN (1993) divided the various areas of study (together with the pertinent theoretical contributions) into four blocks:

1. the analysis of the communicative process—among the most significant contributions here are the work of GUDYKUNST (1989, 1992, 1993,1994), KIM (1977, 1988, 1992) and CASMIR (1991,1993, 1999);
2. the role of language in intercultural communication—here the work of WITTGENSTEIN (1953) and DODD (1991) are seminal;
3. the cognitive organization of the communication process—stimulated by CHOMSKY (1957,1968), FODOR (1986) and VYGOTSKY (1977, 1979); and
4. the development of interpersonal relations, which includes contributions from authors like ALTMAN and TAYLOR (1973) and TING-TOOMEY (1984, 1999). [6]

The influence of quantitative methodologies on studies about intercultural communication was hegemonic until the 1990s, when the publication of the journal "International and Intercultural Communication Annual" began to promote methodological pluralism, opening the doors to the use of qualitative methodology. [7]

2.2 Culture as applied to cross-cultural and intercultural communication

There have been numerous attempts to define the meaning of the term culture following the classic proposal of TAYLOR in 1871. But, as GUDYKUNST and TING-TOOMEY (1988, p.27) point out, "no consensus has been achieved when it comes to formulating an interdisciplinary definition which can be accepted across the diverse fields of study." The sociologist PEDERSEN (1997, p.159) also illustrated the difficulty in defining culture when, following an extensive literature survey he states "[p]eople use culture in the same way as scientists use paradigms

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[13] See also the paper of OTTEN and GEPPERT (2009) in this special issue.

(...) to organize and normalize their activity (...), the elements of culture are used, modified or discarded depending on their utility in organizing reality." [8]

KEESING (1974), using an anthropological approach, was able to distinguish between two main currents: one which considers culture as an adaptive system, and a second one, which treats culture as a symbolic system. Given that both approaches, when taken separately, present serious limitations when it comes to capturing the complex situations which can be found in the context of cross-cultural and intercultural communication, authors like ADLER (1975), KIM (1988) or PEDERSEN (1994) have proposed the use of an interactive approach wherein they define culture as the universe of information that configures the patterns of life in any given society. [9]

FRENCH and BELL (1979) in their classic "Iceberg Model" identify the behavioral, cognitive and emotional components of culture, and these include values, conceptual systems, behavior and both material and symbolic artifacts. On this base, ANEAS (2003, p.120) synthesized as a definition of culture "the set of knowledge, values, emotional heritage, behavior and artifacts which a social group share, and which enable them to functionally adapt to their surroundings." Thus culture affects us in the way we interact with our environment, influencing both how we construct it, and how we understand it. [10]

Clearly the construct "culture" is one which is under continuous modification in the different disciplines in which it is deployed, and especially when it is applied in the context of the processes of globalization and diversity which characterize modern societies. We can, however, identify two main approaches to the use of the term:

1. a traditional conception, which embodies a more popular and static approach and identifies culture with a group of "products" (knowledge, skills, ...) that a community has generated historically, (the "expressive" culture), and

2. an extensive and instrumental conception (the way of being of a community, the conceptual model in which the world is interpreted and the culture is situated) which incorporates a more dynamic use of the term. [11]

The first conception leads back to a series of concepts which have a more "quantitative" interpretation, in that they serve as a synonym for acquired knowledge. Tacitly this leads us back to the idea of culture as something that people "possess," and to considering it as a static "given" whose development is seen as linear and progressive, with outputs which can be expressed in terms of accumulation. Such conceptualization can lead to a process of stereotyping of cultural traits where the "other" is characterized in terms of the most trivial and

superficial elements. From this cumulative and static perspective a hierarchic conception of the relation between cultures (based, for example, on social prestige and/or power) is sometimes deduced. [12]

The second conception could be described as being more complex given that it incorporates more dimensions. It understands the term culture as the instrument by means of which we relate to the world and interpret it. According to this view, culture is not something which we "possess"; rather cultures form an inherent part of the person, and it is culture which bestows individual and collective identity: a complex identity which is articulated across multiple social belongings. It is, then, a mechanism for understanding and interpreting the world which acquires instrumental, adaptive and regulatory meaning. [13]

As a consequence we need to recognize that the classes of social interaction which are examined in studies of cross-cultural and intercultural communication are the result of a socially constructed process, and form part of an individual-collective dialectic, possessing inherently multiple meanings. The meanings produced are constantly being modified and reformulated, and are the emergent product of the perpetual interaction of many cultural perspectives and social situations. It is to these systems, processes and schemas that large parts of the qualitative research efforts in intercultural communication have been directed in an attempt to understand and interpret the diverse cultural practices and representations which can be identified. Finally, we should never forget the social, political and economic context that determines how differences are valued. Interpreting such interaction processes should also be considered as a priority activity in studies of cross-cultural and intercultural communication. Thus, even if it is accepted that culture gives meaning to reality and to the existence of differences in attitudinal, affective and behavioral patterns between different cultural groups, as has been systematically documented in works which are now classics like *Man and Culture* of Ruth BENEDICT (1967), it is nonetheless true that belonging to a group does not mean, always and necessarily, the automatic presence of one or another form of behavior or pattern of communicative interaction. We need to bear in mind, then, that another of the characteristics of "culture" is that it is differentially distributed, and that not all the members of a given cultural group adopt, live or reflect their common culture in an identical way in every moment and life circumstance, nor do all members of the same group demonstrate the same feeling of identification. Viewing cultures in this way would rapidly lead us to adopt the most simplistic of cultural stereotypes, or fall into what STANFIELD (1993, p.21) calls "the fallacy of the monolithic identity" which consists in failing to recognize that differential identities exist among the members of any group. [14]

2.3 Conceptual approaches to the study of culture

According to TRIANDIS (2000), research that studies culture and, more specifically, cross-cultural and intercultural communication in its various forms and social contexts, can approach the theoretical foundations and methodological design of their work from three different perspectives: the indigenous one, the cultural one and the cross-cultural one.

1. The *"indigenous" approach* focuses on the meaning of concepts in a culture and how such meaning may change across demographics within a given culture context. The focus of such studies is the development of knowledge tailored to a specific culture without any special claims to generality beyond the confines of that particular cultural context. The main challenge with the indigenous approach is the difficulty involved in trying to avoid the influence of pre-given concepts, theories and methodologies and therefore the difficulty of determining what the term indigenous (ADAMOPOLOUS & LONNER, 2001) really means in any given culture.

2. The *"cultural" approach* is used to describe those studies which make special use of ethnographic methods. More traditional experimental methods can also be used in conjunction within this approach. Here again the meanings of constructs in a culture are the main focus of attention and there is little of direct comparison of constructs across cultures. The aim is to advance the understanding of the individual in a sociocultural context and to emphasize the importance of culture in understanding his or her behavior. The challenge with this approach is a lack of a widely accepted research methodology (ADAMOPOLOUS & LONNER, 2001).

3. TRIANDIS (2000) states that, when using *"cross-cultural" approaches*, studies obtain data in two or more cultures making the assumption that the constructs under investigation are universals which exist in all of the cultures studied. One positive point about this approach is that it purports to offer an increased understanding of the cross-cultural validity and generalizability of the theories and constructs under investigation. The main challenge, however, comes from the need to demonstrate the equivalence of the constructs and measures used, and to minimize the evident biases that may threaten valid cross-cultural comparisons (ADAMOPOLOUS & LONNER, 2001). Thus not only does the researcher conceptualize and operationalize, but also, and in addition, the differential factor is taken into account, that is to say, the way in which one and the same construct functions in a variety of different cultures. [15]

Indigenous and cultural approaches focus on *emics,* or the things which are unique to a given culture (ЖGISDУTTIR, GERSTEIN & CANEL, 2008, p.190). These approaches are relativistic in that their aim is the in-depth study of the local context and the meaning of constructs without imposing *a priori* definitions on the constructs themselves (TANAKA-MATSUMI, 2001). [16]

Scholars working within these approaches usually reject claims that the theories they work with are universal. On the other hand, in the cross-cultural approach the focus is on *etics*, or factors that are universal across cultures (BRISLIN, LONNER & THORNDIKE, 1973). Here the goal is to understand similarities and differences across cultures, and the comparability of cross-cultural categories or dimensions is emphasized (TANAKA-MATSUMI, 2001). Summing up, *emics* focus on "the native's point of view"; *etics* focus on the "comparative crosscultural point of view." *Emics* and *etics* are perhaps the two most crucial constructs in the study of culture (BHAWUK & TRIANDIS, 1996, p.23)[14]. TRIANDIS' classification, and the references to "emic" and "etic" questions remind us that "MALINOWSKI's dilemma" is still as valid today as it ever was, and that the tensions between "cultural specificities" and "universal-general" continue to remain a challenge for the qualitative approach, and an even greater one, if that is possible, in the area of cross-cultural communication. [17]

Having presented the conceptualization of culture in studies of cross-cultural communication, and examined how the issue of culture is handled in these studies we will now pass on to another key aspect of the relationship between culture and qualitative research into cross cultural communication, and that is how culture makes its presence felt in the process of qualitative research. [18]

2.4 Culture and qualitative research

There is more to qualitative research than simply applying a given method to the assembly and analysis of information. Behind any decision to apply a given methodology lies a series of epistemological and theoretical presuppositions which sustain and orient the whole research process. Such presuppositions range from the underlying conception of reality, to the nature of knowledge itself, to the questions to be studied and to the various methods to be applied. For this reason GUBA and LINCOLN (1994) describe qualitative research as being not only a set of interpretative research techniques but also a discursive space, or metatheoretical discourse. [19]

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[14] See also the articles of BUSCH (2009), MAHADEVAN (2009) and SCHWEGLER (2009) in this special issue for further reflections on emics and etics.

Despite the difficulty involved in formulating a consensually grounded set of general characteristics to define qualitative research, the contributions of SILVERMAN (1997) and LINCOLN and DENZIN (2000) offer a good starting point for examining the interests which impregnate the qualitative research approaches and help to see the influence of the culture within qualitative research process. [20]

According to SILVERMAN (1997, p.1) "[i]t is necessary to expand our conception of qualitative investigation beyond questions related with subjective meaning and broaden research towards dimensions related to language, representation and social organization." And LINCOLN and DENZIN argue (2000, p.1048):

"At the present time, research is though of as being a moral act, or a moral discourse, which leads us towards a dialogue about ethics, vulnerability and truth. The human and social sciences have been converted into a space where it is possible to converse in a critical fashion about democracy, race, gender, class, nation, liberty and community." [21]

These characterizations of qualitative research move us towards the methodological terrain in which research into cross-cultural and intercultural communication can develop, and there we find a number of key elements to consider. [22]

The attention that qualitative research devotes to *context* reminds us that human experience takes place in very clearly delineated social spaces, in such a way that events and phenomena cannot be adequately understood if they are separated from those spaces. This is why the qualitative researcher focuses his or her attention on natural contexts, trying to remain as faithful as possible to those contexts. The "contexts" in which qualitative research develops should not be considered, however, as "a cultural" space. Culture, explicitly or implicitly impregnates the events, experiences, and attitudes that form the object of the research. [23]

Experience is approached in an overall and holistic way, and the person is not seen as simply the sum of a collection of discrete and separate parts. [24]

The researcher play a fundamental role of the in the process of information gathering and data analysis. That is, in qualitative studies the investigator is constituted as the principal instrument in the process of information gathering, in interaction with reality.

"Researchers need to observe what they have before them, forming a reference structure and a set of intentions. The I is the instrument which unifies the situation and bestows meaning on it (...). Knowing what to exclude involves having a sense of what is, and what isn't,

significant, and having a structure which makes the search for significance efficient" (EISNER, 1998, p.50). [25]

This question implies a special competence on the part of the researcher for addressing questions of sensitivity and perception and is also closely related with the researcher's own culture, which determines what she or he sees, and serves as a filter for interpretation. [26]

Another characteristic of qualitative studies is their interpretative character. EISNER (1998) highlights the fact that interpretation has two meanings. On the one hand the qualitative researcher tries to justify, elaborate or integrate the research results within a given theoretical framework. On the other, the researcher wants the participants in the study to speak for themselves, and to approach their singular experience through the meanings and the vision of the world they possess by offering what GEERTZ (1987) calls "dense description," and this is, in its turn, impregnated with their culture. [27]

In addition to the above characteristics, interest has grown in questions related to power, control, and the construction, interpretation and representation of reality, the legitimacy of texts and the role of class, race, gender and ethnicity in research processes. As a consequence of this, another fundamental characteristic feature of qualitative research has emerged: reflexivity. Reflexivity implies paying attention to the diverse linguistic, social, cultural, political and technical elements which influence in an overall fashion the process of knowledge development (interpretation) in the language and narrative (forms and presentation) and impregnate the production of texts (authority and legitimacy). This also involves paying attention to the individual being studied, recognizing the theoretical and personal assumptions which enter into his or her actions, as well as the relation with the other participants and the community in which the study is carried out (SANDHN, 2003). That is what is involved is making visible and explicit, among other factors, the role of culture, and its influence in the process and outcome of the study. Thus the close relationship which exists between culture and qualitative research should be clear, both from the perspective of the researcher and from the reality being studied (subjects, institutions, contexts, etc.). [28]

3. Methodical Challenges in Researching Cross-Cultural and Intercultural Communication

Citing the view of BHAWUK and TRIANDIS (1996, p.31), the appropriate methodology to apply in any given study into cross-cultural and intercultural communication depends on the actual problem which is being investigated, on the knowledge available to the researchers, on the degree of acceptance by those

being studied of the techniques used in the study, among many other factors. These authors recommend *emic* approaches such as ethnographic techniques, systematic observations, content analysis, and in-depth interviews when commencing a study in culturally unknown scenarios with the objective of coming to know this reality either in depth or from a holistic but unique perspective. When there is an interest in generalizing the results or in facilitating possible comparisons between the works in hand and other similar research, it is desirable, according to BHAWUK and TRIANDIS (1996), to use *etic* approaches in which mixed or exclusively quantitative methods are employed. That is, it would seem to be the case that in carrying out qualitative research the use of *emic* type approaches is more appropriate. But this should not be taken to mean that such research may not include recourse to an objective instrument or the incorporation of a component more typically associated with *etic* type approaches. [29]

In terms of the *information gathering process* it should be pointed out that the researcher needs to keep constantly in mind the diversity of the elements in which culture can manifest itself. In this sense the question of the extent to which culture influences the approach, development and outcome of the information gathering process needs to be asked. In order to offer a concise response to this question we would refer to contemporary epistemological arguments. In general it is not accepted that scientific knowledge reflects and describes the reality of an object in and of itself, and that the object can be identified and grasped in a value free way (CHALMERS, 1982). That is, an interpretative epistemology assumes the presence of culture, among other factors, in the activities and processes which form part of the approach to empirical reality. Today it is widely accepted that it is an error to imagine that observational evidence enters our field of perception in a way which is totally independent of the theoretical interpretation which is applied to it. Theories about culture offer us important indications about the potential influence of culture in the design and application of the differing techniques and strategies used in qualitative research in order to proceed with information gathering. The contributions are diverse both in terms of sources and in indications, so we will try to structure them around four principal axes: the content of the information being gathered, the nature of the interpersonal intercultural relations generated in applying a technique or strategy, and the language in use in the research process. [30]

3.1 Content of the information being gathered

BHAWUK and TRIANDIS (1996, p.29) offer an interesting collection of insights and recommendations when it comes to the content of interviews. Interviewing is one of the fundamental techniques used in qualitative research on cross-cultural and

intercultural communication. One of the principal concerns when conducting an interview is whether an emic or an etic approach is more appropriate—that is, whether to ask different, tailor-made and culture-specific questions or ask the same questions in all the cultural contexts being studied. If the same questions are to be used, researches should avoid emic concepts. It is often useful to use random probes. One should also examine what ideas the respondents have about the interviewer, about the questions themselves, and whether the questions appear to the respondents to be in some way biased are issues are discussed in detail by PAREEK and RAO (1980). [31]

The interviewer's perspective can bias both *what* is observed and *how* it is observed. In this sense BHAWUK and TRIANDIS (1996, p.28) argue that the most frequent errors to be found in cross-cultural research are the result of the reactions of those being observed to the observer, to the encoding system used and to the fact that the definitions of boundaries for behavior were culture-specific. They also recommend the use of multiple observers, encoding systems that have been pre-tested in a variety of cultures and extensive observer training as being likely to reduce such problems. [32]

3.2 The interpersonal intercultural relation climate

In referring to the interpersonal relations which inevitably develop during processes of qualitative research into cross-cultural and intercultural communication there is an extensive body of literature which has examined both the presence and the manifestations of culture. [33]

Psychological factors associated with anxiety and its effects on intercultural relations have been studied by numerous researchers. According to STEPHAN, STEPHAN and GUDYKUNST (1999, p. 613):

"When individuals who come from different groups interact, they experience in one way or another a certain preoccupation. This preoccupation can be due to the possibility of not being sufficiently able to remain detached, fear of being negatively affected by the encounter, apprehension about being the victim of misunderstanding, confrontation, etc. The anxiety generated by all these possibilities can in and of itself create difficulties for the interview and generate effects which negatively affect the relationship between interviewer and interviewee." [34]

One of the most widely disseminated theories in the context of intercultural processes when viewed from the psychological perspective is the theory of *Anxiety Uncertainty Management* (AUM) developed by GUDYKUNST (1989, 1992, 1993). AUM takes the view that managing the anxiety which is generated by uncertainty is a process which exerts a fundamental influence on the efficacy of communication

and intercultural competence. This theory was initially developed by BERGER and CALABRESE (1975) in their *Uncertainty Reduction Theory* (URT). The most important axiom in this theory holds that:

"Uncertainty anxiety management has a direct influence on the efficacy of communication in interpersonal and intergroup encounters. Individuals can communicate effectively to the extent that they are able to manage their anxiety and that they feel themselves able to predict the attitudes, feelings and behaviour of the interlocutor (or interlocutors) with a certain degree of success" (STEPHAN, STEPHAN & GUDYKUNST, 1999, p.614) [35]

What this means is, that when it comes to setting up a qualitative research process involving study participants from different cultures it is important to be aware of the anxiety which, even if unconsciously, can affect all those involved. Such anxiety can place limits on the communicative relations which are produced and influence the other intellectual and relational processes which are developed in the research[15]. Thus it is essential to be aware of such potential anxiety, to anticipate its influence, and to incorporate strategies for reducing its impact, thus facilitating mutual confidence and making the communication process more effective. [36]

Symbolic interactionism places considerable emphasis on the importance of structuring intercultural interaction. It stresses the need for compromise in initiating the interaction, the role of negotiation throughout the encounter, the significance of the positions which each of the participants occupies, and the frameworks or action guidelines they use, and which configure interaction as a ritual (VILA, 2005, p.55). These contributions are especially necessary in the development of strategies for contexts where (inter-)cultural interaction is especially intense and free, as, for example, in the case of ethnographic studies. [37]

DODD (1991) outlined a theory of rhetoric which argues that the first studies in intercultural communication had their origins in anthropology and rhetoric. This theory facilitates the analysis not only of individual differences but also of the properties of the context in which the interaction takes place. This makes it easier for the researcher to identify those cultural traits and norms that need to be understood to produce a better intercultural relation. [38]

There are examples of qualitative research where the existence of a good relation is fundamental. This is the case, for example, in action research. If such action research is realized in an intercultural context the key role of the relations between the researcher and the participants of the study is fundamental. The importance of

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[15] See also the article of HOFFMAN (2009) in this special issue, who proposes an incremental interview approach protocol to sensitize fort these problems.

negotiation, construction, mutual confidence between the various participants in such transformative processes should constantly be borne in mind. In order to understand the way in which this kind of relation may develop ATMAN and TAYLOR (1973) present their theory of *Social Penetration*. It has been an important reference point for analyzing the interpersonal relations dimension within the context of relations between different cultures too. This theory holds that any interpersonal intercultural relation between two or more interlocutors passes through five distinct development stages: orientation, exploratory exchanges, affective exchanges, stable exchange and mutual awareness. [39]

3.3 Language in the research process

The role of language is fundamental in cross-cultural and intercultural qualitative research. We would like to give special attention to the mediating role of language in the process. Language is the main medium in which information circulates and it assembles itself as the message transmitter. [40]

In order to understand and interpret utterances or gestures in a given language, a minimum degree of language equivalence between the language of those being studied and that of the researcher is needed (LUSTIG & KOESTER, 1996; SAMOVAR, PORTER & STEFANI, 1998). Clearly situations may easily arise in which the lack of such equivalence is a real barrier to communication and understanding for the research. These barriers extend from simple lexical nonequivalence to an experiential non-equivalence, passing through various other degrees of difficulty. [41]

The references to the role of language which are to be found in DODD's (1991) theory of the coordinated management of meaning and rules are interesting and relevant. DODD's theory holds that all human communication is by its very nature imperfect. For him the objective of communication, in our case the communication which is developed during the research process, is coordination, understood here as a model of interaction between participants. [42]

The theory of cross-cultural communication offers a great heritage of knowledge and resources to identify and understand communicative differences. For example, GUDYKUNST and TING-TOOMEY (1988) or BENNETT (1998) proposed models of communicative cultural styles. As VILA (2005, p.78) points out, differences between verbal styles as well as affecting communication between people of different reference cultures, may also, if ignored, lead to differences in interpretation. LUSTIG and KOESTER (1996) have analyzed nonlinear communication. For example, an individual with a circular style may interpret

another, who has a more lineal style of discourse, as being simplistic or arrogant, while the latter may view the person with a circular style as illogical or evasive. [43]

Some authors as EKMAN and FRIESEN (1969) or DODD (1991) have analyzed problems of non-verbal gesture in intercultural interaction. In an interview or in a focus group, a look or a gesture, even a smile, may signify something different from one culture to another. In addition to influencing the effectiveness of the process of attributing meaning to such gestures, these differences may also alter the communication climate or influence the development of the research process, given the possibility of reducing confidence, producing doubts, etc. [44]

3.4 Culture, analysis and interpretation in qualitative research

In this section we consider the presence of culture in the cognitive processes of research. These processes include a wide spectrum of intellectual activities: knowing, understanding, comparison, analysis, synthesis, evaluation. To what extend does culture influence such processes? As ANDERSEN (1993, p.51) suggests discussions of race, class, and gender need to be thoroughly integrated into debates about research process and data analysis. This requires an acknowledgment of the complex, multiple, and contradictory identities and realities that shape our collective experience. [45]

First we will look at some theories and conceptual contributions which can provide orientation. [46]

Contributions from theories that focus on the role of language in cross-cultural communication have been significant in clarifying the part played by culture in the processes of information interpretation (RODRIGO, 1999). The role of WITTGENSTEIN (1953) has been fundamental here, since he was the first who made the decisive break with the traditional separation between language and thought, justifying this move with the argument that language is organized through rules which are based on cultural use[16]. It is precisely this structural organization which gives meaning to gestures and utterances. In this same sense, according ERICKSON (1989), the base for theoretical constructions is the immediate and local meanings of action as defined from the point of view of the social actors involved. In other words, we interpret a reality, a given piece of information according to the parameters of our experience in which our culture occupies a fundamental position. Culture is the reason why a given phenomenon, a specific form of behavior can be given a very different meaning according to the origin culture of the person analyzing and interpreting the process. [47]

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[16] See also the paper of BARINAGA (2009) in this special issue for a discussion of WITTGENSTEIN's role in intercultural communication.

With respect to the relation between culture and theories of cognitive organization, the contribution of constructionism to the processes of analysis, interpretation and intellectual creation is worthy of special attention. Among the many contributions of constructionism with special relevance to the relationship with culture we would highlight the construction of mental schemas (COLL, MARCHESI & PALACIOS, 1990). Mental schemas constitute a cognitive system which enables us to interpret the gestures, utterances and actions of others. Culture influences the organization of the schemas developed by individuals with the justification that different visions and interpretations of reality are culturally variable. In the same sense constructionism stresses the importance of sociocultural background in the higher order psychological processes (VYGOTSKY, 1979) as an argument with which to demonstrate the union of culture with cognitive processes and the relation between learning, development and the contexts of personal relations. [48]

Another contribution to our understanding of the relation between culture and cognitive processes comes from the tradition which studies the influence of roles and stereotypes in the creation of mental schemas and social categorization (CASMIR, 1991). In this sense the process of social categorization favors positive biases for "own-culture" groups and negative biases for groups belonging to other cultures (GUDYKUNST, 1989). Summing up, theories of categorization and social attribution facilitate the development of explanations concerning the perception and interpretation of the behavior of others in intercultural contexts. [49]

Ethnomethodology, which focuses on the analysis of spontaneous conversation seen as a social activity, considers language as a privileged instrument which gives meaning to a situation. From this point of view reality is not discovered but rather interpreted, constructed, negotiated and maintained through social interaction. This focus suggests analyzing intercultural communicative situations from a constructivist and interpretative perspective. [50]

The work of BHAWUK and TRIANDIS (1996, p.24) focuses on the level of analysis, and suggests that, depending on the objectives being pursued in research into cross cultural communication, it is possible to distinguish two levels of analysis: the *individual* and the *ecological*. The etic-individual studies might include attempts to show the universality of a phenomenon (LONNER, 1980); this might well be the approach which is closest to the positivist methodologies often associated with quantitative methodologies. The emic-individual studies might include studies of subjective culture, such as the ones that established the meaning of the word *philotimo* (VASSILIOU & VASSILIOU, 1973). Etic-ecological studies are holegeistic (whole-world) studies described by NAROLL, MICHIK and NAROLL (1980). The emic-ecological are attempts to show that certain cultures

are high and other cultures low on some variable; HOFSTEDE's (1991) study, for example, would fall into this category. [51]

There is thus an extensive literature that attempts to demonstrate the influence of culture in cognitive processes, and extrapolating, in qualitative research. The researcher thinks, interprets and reasons on the basis of her or his cultural points of reference. When faced with one and the same phenomenon two researchers can arrive at opposing conclusions, and culture may be one of the factors which help to explain this kind of situation. Language and mental maps are cultural elements with which the researcher operates in the analysis and the construction of results. [52]

4. Conclusions

In this article we have attempted, from a general perspective, to address the issue of how culture is conceptualized/manifests itself in the application of qualitative research methodology to cross-cultural and intercultural communication. Despite the numerous definitions of culture it can be asserted that the conceptualization applied in cross-cultural and intercultural communication studies is characterized by its complexity, dynamism and intersubjective character, and that in this conceptualization it is possible to identify a multiplicity of components of which the individual is not always aware. It has become clear throughout this article that culture constantly makes its presence felt in the research process, and especially in the context of qualitative research, starting with the theoretical-epistemological foundations of such research, as well as in the process of approaching and generating empirical data and in its analysis and interpretation. In the same way cross-cultural theory has contributed elements which make such influences more visible, with the result that it has become easier to accept, live with and manage this influence. [53]

The current thematic issue of *FQS* seems to us to constitute an opportunity for the research community to re-examine the way we look at alterity and at the same time to develop research processes which broaden the opportunities for coexistence and social justice in a multicultural world. In the course of this article we have constantly drawn attention to the cultural relevance of social practices, as well as to intercultural communication and its symbolic dimension. Our short review of the theoretical questions which arise in connection with qualitative research as it interacts with the construct "culture" attempts to stress the need to address the substantive areas of intercultural communication and epistemology together. [54]

The fallacy of the monolithic view of identity alerts us to the need for prudence and the importance of avoiding categorizing cultural studies of communication in stereotypical terms, as built on folklore beliefs and essentialist in terms of culture. On the other hand, it is already widely accepted in qualitative research that the researcher becomes the "principal information gathering instrument," and thus some of the objectives which have been identified for studies of cross-cultural and intercultural communication are associated with the reflexivity of the researcher over her or his own cultural biases together with the associated theoretical, and even social and political standpoints. [55]

This also applies to the possibility of learning the meanings of cultural interaction on the basis of transactions between different cultural worlds, symbolic systems, individual and collective cultures. Perhaps the process of renewal of qualitative research methods in the context of cross-cultural and intercultural communication really needs to start with a reflection over the life history of the researcher given that the researcher is also immersed in the norms, values and beliefs of the institutions, communities and movements in which she or he functions, and which give ideological form to the whole process. [56]

For the outlook of researching cross-cultural and intercultural communication we would stress that culture is a "system" and not the sum of a collection of fortuitous traits. It is an integrated whole which cannot be understood by examining its components individually and in isolation. It is a dynamic whole which is in flux, and constantly changing, and which reveals itself as being in interaction with the world in a multiplicity of complex and diverse situations and contexts. Some authors, being conscious of this, have gone so far as to propose the possibility of approaching the study of human communication from the perspective of contemporary chaos theory or from that of the complexity paradigm, a proposal which could well be a task which could be explored in the future. [57]

Acknowledgments

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Citation

Aneas, Marнa Assumpta & Sandнn, Marнa Paz (2009). Intercultural and Cross-Cultural Communication Research: Some Reflections about Culture and Qualitative Methods [57paragraphs]. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, *10*(1), Art. 51, http://nbn-esolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs0901519.

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