

Examrace

Competitive Exams: Community, Association & Culture

Glide to success with Doorsteptutor material for UGC : Get [detailed illustrated notes covering entire syllabus](#): point-by-point for high retention.

Community

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

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

1. Communities may be thought of as collections of people with a particular social structure; there are, therefore, collections which are not communities. Such a notion often equates community with rural or pre-industrial society and may, in addition, treat urban or industrial society as positively destructive.
2. A sense of belonging or community spirit.
3. All the daily activities of a community, work and non work, take place within the geographical area, which is self contained. Different accounts of community will contain any or all of these additional elements.

Characteristics of Community

1. Territory
2. Close and informal relationships
3. Mutuality
4. Common values and beliefs
5. Organized interaction
6. Strong group feeling

7. Cultural similarity

Association

Men have diverse needs, desires and interests which demand satisfaction. There are three ways of fulfilling these needs. Firstly they may act independently each in his own way without caring for others. This is unsocial with limitations. Secondly men may seek their ends through conflicts with one another. Finally men may try to fulfill their ends through cooperation and mutual assistance. This cooperation has a reference to association.

When a group or collection of individuals organize themselves expressly for the purpose of pursuing certain of its interests together on a cooperative pursuit an association is said to be born. According to Morris Ginsberg an association is a group of social beings related to one another by the fact that they possess or have instituted in common an organization with a view to securing a specific end or specific ends. The associations may be found in different fields. No single association can satisfy all the interests of the individual or individuals. Since Man has many interests, he organizes various associations for the purpose of fulfilling varied interests. He may belong to more than one organization.

Main Characteristics of Association

- **Association:** An association is formed or created by people. It is a social group. Without people there can be no association. It is an organized group. An unorganized group like crowd or mob cannot be an association.
- **Common interest:** An association is not merely a collection of individuals. It consists of those individuals who have more or less the same interests. Accordingly those who have political interests may join political association and those who have religious interests may join religious associations and so on:
- **Cooperative spirit:** An association is based on the cooperative spirit of its members. People work together to achieve some definite purposes. For example a political party has to work together as a united group on the basis of cooperation in order to fulfill its objective of coming to power.
- **Organization:** Association denotes some kind of organization. An association is known essentially as an organized group. Organization gives stability and proper shape to an association. Organization refers to the way in which the statuses and roles are distributed among the members.
- **Regulation of relations:** Every association has its own ways and means of regulating the relation of its members. Organization depends on this element of regulation. They may assume written or unwritten forms.
- **Association as agencies:** Associations are means or agencies through which their members seek to realize their similar or shared interests. Such social organizations necessarily act not

merely through leaders but through officials or representatives as agencies. Associations normally act through agents who are responsible for and to the association.

- **Durability of association:** An association may be permanent or temporary. There are some long standing associations like the state; family, religious associations etc. Some associations may be temporary in nature.

Social Institutions

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

In shorthand form, or as concepts, these five basic institutions are called the family, government, economy, education and religion.

The five primary institutions are found among all human groups. They are not always as highly elaborated or as distinct from one another as into the United States, but, in rudimentary form at last, they exist everywhere. Their universality indicates that they are deeply rooted in human nature and that they are essential in the development and maintenance of orders. Sociologists operating in terms of the functionalist model society have provided the clearest explanation of the functions served by social institutions. Apparently there are certain minimum tasks that must be performed in all human groups.

Unless these tasks are performed adequately, the group will cease to exist. An analogy may help to make the point. We might hypothesize that cost accounting department is essential to the operation of a large corporation. A company might procure a superior product and distribute it then at the price which is assigned to it, the company will soon go out of business. Perhaps the only way to avoid this is to have a careful accounting of the cost of each step in the production and distribution process.

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

1. In determining Kinship
2. In providing for the legitimate use of power
3. In regulating the distribution of goods and services
4. In transmitting knowledge from one generation to the next
5. in regulating our relation to the supernatural.

Culture

As Homo sapiens, evolved, several biological characteristics particularly favorable to the development of culture appeared in the species. These included erect posture; a favorable

brain structure; stereoscopic vision; the structure of the hand, a flexible shoulder; and year round sexual receptivity on the part of the female. None of these biological characteristics alone, of course, accounts for the development of culture. Even in combination, all they guarantee is that human beings would be the most gifted members of the animal kingdom.

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

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

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

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

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