

Understanding Society & Social relations



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UNDERSTANDING SOCIETY

AND

SOCIAL RELATIONS

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FOREWORD

This first edition of the understanding society and social relations with particular reference to work organisation is a welcome addition to an increasing battery of academic resource materials that exist to service students and practitioners alike in the area of societal study and element of social relations in this intellectual community and the wider academic circles. For a number of reasons, the book follows a broad theoretical and practical analyses with relevant examples drawn from all over the world but with emphasis on the African and Nigerian experience.

In addition, many issues of interest are discussed in the book with special emphasis and reference to the basic theory and perspectives underlying the discipline of social relations, social institution, labour management relations as well as industrial and formal organisations.

The book will no doubt stimulate further research into the basic concepts and theories in societal understanding and social relations. This apart, the book will definitely and undoubtedly contribute to the effective teaching and learning in the face of paucity of books and their outrageous prices whenever they are available.

By and large, it gives me great pleasure to write this foreword to a book which has tasked, in no small measure, the resilience of the authors concerned with its publication.

Happy reading.

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PREFACE

The encouragement for writing this book came mainly from our students that we have taught at our regular and part time programmes, and those of our colleagues, most especially in sociology department with whom we have had profitable intellectual interactions.

The idea of writing a book on Understanding Society and Social Relations specifically designed and arranged to meet the needs of our students was conceived two years ago and informed by the dearth of relevant textbooks in our environment. In this book, we have deployed theories of social relations as well as forces within the context of our society for analysing workplace and labour-management and social relations in general.

The book no doubt will serve as companion for students in elements of social relations, Understanding Society, Introductory Sociology, Formal Organisation and most especially sociology of religion. It is also invaluable for managers and Practitioners of industrial relations as well as teachers and students in the study of society as an exciting field of study.

There are fourteen chapters in the book. The first chapter describe the definition, scope and nature of social relations as well as its various perspectives. In the second chapter, social interaction, its features and various forms are described. The author also showed here that interactions are not limited within our body social but that they are found in industrial and work organisations. Chapter three presents a description of social structure, its meaning and importance with special reference to normative system across cultures.

In chapter four, explanations on society and culture are advanced. Social stratification, inequality and social mobility were explained indepth. The authors attempt at differentiation between social stratification and social inequality. Similarly, reference was made to comparative stratification system across societies. Chapter six opens an explanation of social institutions, process of institutionalization and codes of behaviour with special focus on family institution. Chapter seven to ten illustrated the remaining

other social institutions such as economic, political, education and religious institutions. These chapters most especially the one on religion, really took a lot of our time because of the paucity and poor reliability of social data sources.

In chapter eleven, we attempt a discussion of the rudiments of deviant behaviour, social disorganisation and social control. Chapter twelve explains collective behaviour, its conditions as well as some of its determinants, Chapter thirteen is devoted to the analysis of social change. The theoretical and peculiarities of the phenomenon of social change were attempted. In the concluding chapter, an exhaustive explanation of society and industry and the relationships thereof were advanced. This chapter actually shows the forces and workings in industrial organisations by making reference to industrialised and industrializing societies.

Therefore, to aid students' efforts at improving and consolidating their knowledge, the authors made special efforts to illustrate their explanations of concepts with examples from sub-saharan Africa in general, and the Nigerian society, in particular.

We must acknowledge the help rendered by many of our colleagues who spent their precious time reading the manuscript and whose diverse criticisms and suggestions have undoubtedly enhanced the quality of the book. We are highly indebted to Professor Segun Matanmi, Dr. Ademola Elias, Dr. Leke Fakoya (you are blessed), Dr. Laide Adedokun, Dr. Wole Atere, Dr. Abanikanda, Dr. Ayantunji, Tony Ajala and Bayo Fadeyi for the tutelage you all offered.

Futhermore, we wish to acknowledge the inspiration we got from our colleagues and students, past and present from whose vast experience we have gained tremendously. We are highly indebted to Messers. Andy Olagbemi, Taiwo Kazeem, Dare Akinsola, Mike Aremo, Bola Tugbobo, Elias Wahab, Mrs. Bisi Yussuf, Bayo Kehinde, Akeem Ajonbadi, Tom Ashafa, Ayo Edu, Idowu, Kolawole and Jaiyeoba. We also cherish the encouragement and contributions of our immediate families who pave the way by providing for the crucial foundations.

Special thanks also goes to Mr. and Mrs. M. Ola Rickett (U.K.), Tunde Genty, Bolaji Anifowoshe, Kenny, Salau, Toyin Rasheed and Taiwo for believing so much in us. Nothing can be achieved without the wish of the Almighty. To God be the glory and greatest thanks.

This book is dedicated to all progressive intellectuals practising in the periphery. While we owe so much, to so many for this publication, unfortunately we alone assume responsibility for all omissions and errors.

OLAWALE SHABI
KAYODE AWE
LAGOS. JULY, 2001.

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CHAPTER ONE

CONCEPT AND SCOPE OF SOCIAL RELATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The first fruit of sociological imagination and the first lesson of the social science is the idea that the individual can understand his own experiences and gauge his own fate only by locating within his period that he can know his own chances only by becoming aware of those all individuals in his circumstances. By the fact of his living, he contributes however minutely to the shaping of his society and to the course of its history as he is made by society and its historical push and shove.

In large part, contemporary man's self conscious view of himself as at least an outsider if not a permanent passenger, rest upon an absorbed realization of social reality and of the transformative power of history. This is because history and social biographies plays an important role in the forces that determines social relations. It is on the basis of this that a deep understanding of social relations would constitute correct dosage for an individual who wishes to understand his position, life chances and orientation in the society's past, present and future. This stems from the fact that "No man is an island entire of itself". Therefore, man would want to know why and how social forces as directed him to school, to the police station, to be a driver or a peasant farmer and most importantly, how changes in society will affect his position.

A full grasp of the elements of social relations will highlight for the ordinary man why within a collectivity he should marry, when and why necessary. Why despite the fact that there is no uncoming vehicle a man should climb the pedestrian bridges when crossing an express road? In fact, one finds it difficult to accept whether the system in which man finds himself is a liability or an asset for within it, the forces of continuity guarantees man survival (Horton and Hunt, 1964). Thus, the dictates of how, where and

things should be done constitute a major constraint on the initiative freedom of man for finding solutions to personal problems. Apart from fixed characteristics such as big eyes, pointed nose etc. and drives as emotions such as hunger, sex and other imperatives of living are facts of the social environment. This in large part calls for social dependence and loss of freedom. Hence, society becomes a creation of leading to a web or interwoven structure that guarantees human life. It should however be noted that indeed, affection, not money, is the primary medium of exchange in human or social relations - for we must learn to like ourselves through the reactions of others to us. Therefore, relations could be referred to:

*as the interaction of human beings in society
culminating in social interdependence to guarantee
cohesion and continuity of human life (Levy, 1952.)*

As note, every member of society has some form of social relationships with everyone whom he may come into contact with, or deal with in some way. All groups involve social relationships but the existence of a social relationship does not necessarily mean the existence of a group (Shabi, 1999). The mostly outstanding feature of man's life is the degree to which all his contact with other men are structured. As such, most part of human living consist of routine usual events that provides the structures of life and not the random or unique events but the daily patterns which guide the actions and attitudes of a given group of people. Above all, for life to continue, there must be progress and consensus which brings about social interdependence (Shabi, 1999)

SOCIAL RELATIONS PERSPECTIVES

One of the hardest things for the untrained eyes to see is simply the routine underpinning daily social relationships. Everyone has become accustomed to the fact that he kisses his children or waves to his neighbours, that these acts are virtually invisible. Hence, for a better understanding of social relations, we need to understand those things familiarity has blinded us to. However, what the social sciences are probably all about is the human

varieties which consist of the social worlds in which men have lived, are living and might live. In order to achieve this objective therefore, a working set of assumptions has been developed which is referred to as a perspective and approach or sometimes as a paradigm. What then are some of the perspectives used in social relations?

THE INTERACTIONIST PERSPECTIVE

Here, there is no grand theory of society because the state, society and social institutions according to this school are conceptual abstractions. In other words, this school of thought rejects the notion of social system. Since it is only people and their interaction that can be studied directly, interactionism looks primarily at how people interact, that is, act towards and respond to one another at the same time. It focuses on more immediate, face-to-face encounters rather than on such large abstractions as "society", "social system", or "economy". The mere fact that interaction among human beings is the fundamental social process, social institutions are not studied as a whole but in part.

Symbolic interactionism such as Mead and Cooley concentrates upon interaction taking place in groups. They noted symbols formed the main basis of interaction, signs, gestures and most importantly, written and spoken words. Here, a word has no meaning until there is an agreement as to the special meanings it carries. People do not respond to the words directly, rather responses are directed to meanings they impute into things. Thus meanings are not fixed entities but they depend in part on the context of interaction. This was therefore referred to as the definition of the situation by an early sociologist - Thomas, W.I. This approach has been useful in dealing with personality development and human behaviour and less useful in dealing with large groups and social institutions e.g. campus demonstrations because of its huge nature.

THE FUNCTIONALIST PERSPECTIVE

For this school, society is seen as a network of organisation with cooperating members operating in an orderly manner according to a set of rules and values shared by most members. That is, a stable system with a tendency towards equilibrium, meaning a tendency to obtain a balanced harmoniously operating system. Each group or institution survives because of the function it performs. Function in this context is an objective consequence for the maintenance of the system. There are manifest functions (clearly recognised) and latent functions (unintended and unrecognised).

Thus, social change disrupts equilibrium and is viewed initially as dysfunctional. Although, stability may be regained later. To this school, if social change promotes harmonious equilibrium, it is seen as functional, if it disrupts the equilibrium, it is dysfunctional, if it has no effect, it is not functional. It should however be noted that the school does not really believe in change because once there is change, the function performs by a concept will be eliminated. Hence, a value or practice which is functional at one time or place may become dysfunctional at a later period. This school of social relations believes that various parts of society are seen to be interrelated and when taken together, they form a complete system. Here, social relations is patterned and recurrent. Prominent in this school of thought are Talcott Parsons (1949) and Kingsley Davies (1949).

THE CONFLICT PERSPECTIVE

This is directly based upon the work of Karl Marx, Lewis Coser and Wright Mills and they opine that social relations would always be in conflict and that society is dominated by class exploitation. Society to this school is held together through power of dominant groups. "Value-Consensus" which the functionalist school believes to hold society is according to the conflict school imposed upon the social system by the dominant groups. Conflict theorists ask questions as who benefits and who suffers from the present social arrangements? How do they manipulate social institutions to protect their privileges? etc.

THE EVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVE

This is the earliest theoretical approach offered in studying social relations. It seems to offer a satisfying explanation of how human societies came into being and grew. Focus is upon similarities in changing societies. Also, it emphasises progress because of its interest in the development of society from primitive and rudimentary stages to that of advance and complex society. The evolutionary perspective is an active one. For example, this school will want to know whether industrialization will have the same effect upon the family in developing countries that it seems to have had in western nations. This school was mainly based on the work of Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer.

COMPARISON OF THE PERSPECTIVES

Having explained each of these perspectives, it is in order to ask, which of the perspectives would you consider the most appropriate in understanding the elements of social relations? The question of which is the best cannot be answered for none is "right" or "wrong" but each is a different way of looking at the society. For example, in the study of class inequality, evolutionists look at its historical development in different societies. For the interactionist, it is how class inequality affects people and how their behaviour affects their class position whereas its operation in all societies to distribute tasks and rewards and keep the system operating is what concerns the functionalist. The conflict theorist would view inequality as imposed and maintained by dominant groups to perpetrate their privileges. Considering these obvious cases, all are useful and necessary for a complete understanding of the social structure, though they may be used in different contexts. However, many sociologists and social relations analysts have their favourite perspectives upon which they rely heavily.

CONCEPTS

Since a lot of concepts are entrenched and have to be discussed in the consequent chapters of this book, it is in order to operationalize what a

concept is, so as to facilitate better understanding of all social concepts to be discussed thereof. Thus, the main purpose of both the natural and social sciences is to understand the world in which we live and gather experience. In order to understand the social system therefore, sociologists, industrial relations expert etc. develops concept which are used for a better interpretative understanding of human relations. Concepts are tools that facilitate scholarly thinking and communication.

Strictly speaking, a concept is a general notion or an idea of a class of objects or phenomena which becomes an aspect of man's thought reflecting his experiences in his philosophical and material world. For a precise explanation of the social structure, carefully expressed concepts are needed to carry on a scientific discussion. Again, the formulation of concept leads to an increase knowledge necessary for explaining social processes and actions. The fact that concept are necessary tools for scientific inquiry, they could be applied to or analyse within the context of the observed facts. They are therefore abstractions based on observed empirically verifiable facts indispensable in scientific predictions. Concepts thus leads us to look for patterns, regularities and uniformities in the world around us. Concepts in industrial relations, Sociology, humanities and therefore like all scientific ones refers to types of classes of events, persons and relationships such as revolution, doctors, lecturers, family, industrial conflict and collective bargaining.

To fully understand the social system, there is need to focus scientific study of society or social relations from other social sciences. However, one think it is important that the use of abstract concept makes possible the derivation of generalizations relevant to a wide range of observations.

Again, because concept change overtime and space, cross-cultural and historical usage are being put into use in order to reflect their conceptual meaning. Moreover, the growth of any science requires the continual testing of the many alternative concepts that scholars offers for use in the competitive market for ideas. Thus, the need therefore arises to test the general acceptability of the meaning of family across culture. When man

creates a concept, a broad category that may cover a large group of specific examples would be developed. Therefore, concepts are tools used to synthesize the society and as such, a student of social relations should learn concepts as roles, institutions, culture, groups etc. because they are everyday words that needs technical explanation (Shabi, 1993).

BASIC CONCEPTS IN THE STUDY OF SOCIAL RELATIONS

There are certain basic elements that are pertinent and are often used in the analyses of social relations. Some of these concepts have been identified and duely explained here.

EGOCENTRISM

This refers to excessive individualism within a collectivity or a kind of undifferentiation between the self and social environment, that is, it has to do with the inability to see one's self clearly as a subject distinct from the entourage. It should however be noted that sociocentric attitudes in a way lessen egocentrism.

PLURALISM

This is a situation in which culturally distinct groups can maintain there separate identities and pursue their group interest without suffering from discrimination, that is, to be an ethnic group but not a minority. The idea of cultural pluralism is not new, it was worked out by philosopher, Horace Kallen over a half century ago, challenging the idea that the ethnic groups should be pressed to assimilate into a homogenous "melting pot". As such, pluralism is highly related to democracy.

ACCULTURATION

This involves a continuous contact between two or more culturally distinct groups during which process one group takes on the elements of the culture of the other group. Relations between societies that have different cultural

traditions vary in many respects. It is a concept that concerns the extent to which societies may be said to be permeable, flexible and open rather than rigid and closed. Hence, it is the changes that occur when different cultural groups come into intensive contact which brings about the process of extensive cultural borrowing in the context of super-ordinate - subordinate relations between societies. The borrowing may be a two way process, but it is the subordinate or less powerful society that borrows the most.

A subordinate society may acculturate to a dominant society even in the absence of direct or indirect force in order to survive in their changed world. Furthermore, acculturation did not mean a conscious identification with the majority group and a rejection of ethnic origins. According to Michael Parenti, ethnics no matter their location in terms of residence often retain ethnic cohesion and identity.

ETHNOCENTRISM

This is a universal human reactions found in all known societies, in all groups and virtually in all individuals. Ethnocentrism makes our cultures as good or bad, high or low, right or wrong in proportion as they resemble ours. There is always quick recognition of ethnocentrism in others but slow to see it in ourselves. Most, if not all, groups, within a society are ethnocentric. Ethnocentrism reinforces nationalism and patriotism in that without ethnocentrism a vigorous national consciousness is probably impossible. This is because periods of national tension and conflict are always accompanied by intensified ethnocentric propaganda. Again, ethnocentrism acts to discourage change in the sense that it has being used to discourage the acceptance of alien elements into the culture.

Therefore, ethnocentrism is a tendency of each group to take for granted the superiority of its own culture. The groups values positively its achievement and peculiar characteristics and adopt projective type of behaviour towards other groups. The in-group interpretes the out-group on the basis of standard obtainable within the in-groups. The degree of ethnocentrism varies,

it could be overt, that is, manifest and easy to locate or it could be covert, that is, latent and hardly observable.

NATIONALISM

This is derived from the concept of nation and hence, the concept of the nation-state flows from nationalism. However, nationalism refers to a feeling of loyalty, belongingness and identification with a nation, however defined. It also implies a preparedness on the part of individual or group to take action in order to protect, promote or project the interest and aspirations of that nation. Nationalism is referred to loosely in political term as a feeling of patriotism, that is, a feeling of love for one's nation, coupled with a preparedness to defend the integrity and security of that nation. Strictly speaking, nation stands over and above individual who forms it. Therefore, nationalism possess a spirit which binds people together into a collective and organic whole. While nationalism is a feeling of loyalty towards the nation, ethnicity is a feeling of loyalty towards an identification with an ethnic group.

RACISM

A race is not a biologically distinct grouping of people but a socially significant reality. Race is a group of people somewhat different from other groups in its combination of inherited physical characteristics. Human species can be divided into main racial stocks - the mongoloid (yellow and brown), the Negroid (blacks) and the Caucasoid (white). As such, racism is a system of beliefs an actions based on these three components. First, it involves the beliefs that one's own race is superior to other racial groups. Hence, racial prejudice and ethnocentrism are properties of racism. Secondly, ideology that justifies the subjugation and exploitation of another group. Thirdly, the beliefs is acted upon.

Racism can take many different forms such as separatism, segregation, subjugation, exploitation, expulsion and others. It has been used by certain groups to justify their exploitation of other groups. A good instance here is

the apartheid in South Africa. There are two types of racism. Individual racism that originates in the racist beliefs on a single person and institutional racism occurs when racist ideas and practices are embodied in the folkways, mores or legal structures of various institutions, skin colour or distinctive physical traits often fix men's place in their society constitute grounds for differential treatment or discrimination, possession of distinctive physical traits or of unique values, beliefs and customs frequently provide both a focus for common loyalties and the basis for collective action, particularly if a group is singled out for discriminatory attention. Physical and cultural differences are often closely linked, but they can also vary independently because racially distinct group sometimes share a common culture and different ethnic group are often derived from the same biological stock. In South Africa for example, white and black are set apart by both appearance and ways of life.

A pattern of intergroup relations, once established is often not readily changed, particularly if it serves some function or provides some gains for the dominant group (Horton and Hunt, 1964). Therefore, persons with a similar biological endowment conceive themselves as a race and they become an ethnic group, for their conception of themselves now binds them together into a social whole. Racial ideologists have often contained assertions that were demonstrably false, but their historic role, particularly in the past century has been far reaching. The Nazis' extermination of six million or more Jews rested upon the doctrine of racial superiority and inferiority.

PREJUDICE

Prejudice can be defined as consisting of rigid and hostile attitudes directed towards a group or towards an individual because he is a member of a group. Better still, prejudices are preconceived attitude or judgement, either good or bad, about another group. It usually involves negative stereotyped beliefs. According to Gordon Allport, "prejudice is thinking ill of others without sufficient warrant". This attitudes therefore typically rest upon inaccurate or unsupported beliefs concerning the character of those against whom they

are focused. Prejudiced person because they are emotionally charged are resistance to change, even if it is firmly established that their opinion and attitude about others rest is false.

Prejudice is variable rather than a fixed entity. Prejudice are therefore learned, it is neither inherent nor automatically acquired. However, an individual's attitudes towards other groups depends largely upon the culture in which he is reared and in which he lives. As such, prejudice implies a judgment expressed before knowing all facts. Prejudice may distort our judgement and make us unable to reach rational decisions. There are five roots of prejudices:

1. Ethnocentrism which inclines us to think well of those in our group and ill of others.
2. Making judgement everyday about people whom we know little.
3. Generalizing from our own experience with individuals of other groups.
4. We select stereotypes to support our beliefs and negates that of others; and
5. We tend to develop prejudices against people who compete with us.

Nevertheless, prejudiced people are therefore conforming to the norms of their own groups and the expectations of their fellow members. Suffice to mention that overt behaviour towards other groups is not simply a product of personality but emerges in a complex social situation.

In the next chapter, we look into an indepth explanation of social interaction and its various form as the foundation upon which all these earlier explained concepts in social relations are instituted.

CHAPTER TWO

SOCIAL INTERACTION

INTRODUCTION

Social structure are created through interaction between two and more people. The concept of social interaction is based on the observation that almost all human actions are oriented towards persons designed to have meaning to them or to influence their state of mind. Social interaction occurs in a variety of ways on a continuum that goes from the totally impersonal at one end to personal at the other. Interaction may not necessarily involve speech as non verbal communication will take care of that such as nodding, gazing, frowning etc. are all process involved in social interaction. It should be noted that words to interaction makes it one degree more personal but the interaction may still be as highly rigid or restricted. Usually, there are appropriate responses different in each case for a stranger you don't expect to see in the future frequently e.g. tenant in your building apartment.

A comparison will show that in many ways, the most rigid and restricting patterns of social interaction are those which are the most impersonal. For example, there are only one or two socially approved ways to behave to an elevator operator in the office whereas there are dozens of approved ways to behave to or interact with parents because interaction in the formal has little significance for either of the parties involved. It is therefore a weak one as its impersonal occurrence is frequent. On the other hand, social bond between a parent and his child is extremely strong extended over a long period of time and quite frequent. There is a high degree of intimacy and consequent potential for emotional gratification. This richness of the interaction and its depth require a much greater informality and spontaneity, hesitation or lack of openness will be resented and considered an insult. In place of roles and ritual to pattern their behaviour is the mutual feeling or dependency and concern each has for the other. In the course of a single day, each person

either in most modern society or primitive communities interact with many other people. Most of these social interactions are causal ones, time occurrence or they are repeated so seldom that there is continuity. However, much of the social interaction taken place within the body social may be continuous and of more permanent nature. When a give and take interaction continues long enough for a relatively stable set of social expectations to develop, the interaction is called a social relationship. As such, society might aptly be described as system of social relationship. It is useful to think of social relationship in terms of the goal which are being sought by individuals involved. Unfocused or instrumental if it is used as a means to some other ends. For instance, the relationship between a customer and a clerk in a drug store, because the customer's goal is to get drugs for his ailment and the clerk selling to earn a living. Majority of daily relationship falls into this category of the instrumental. Expressive or focused relationship are those which are valued for their own sake and have no value beyond the value each partner takes or derives from the relationship. Close friendships are major examples. That is, two or more individuals agree (explicitly or implicitly) to sustain an interaction with one or more particular goals in mind. Actually, most relationships combine the expressive and the instrumental, as the clerk sells the drugs to the customer, but may talk latest on politics or perhaps latest in the economic sphere. Thus, adding expressiveness to their potentially instrumental relationship. Where a friend serves as a referee for other on an application for job, the relationship between the two becomes expressive and instrumental. Many sociologist therefore contends that a growing proportion of relationship in modern societies are primarily instrumental creating a need for more relationships of an expressive type.

FEATURES OF INTERACTION

Interaction as abstract as the concept may seem, it has some features such as purposefulness because it is usually directed toward the attainment of goals clearly recognised and accepted by each of the interacting members. Also, there is conscious or interpersonal awareness of the existence of each member and the recognition of feedback effect on the individual members of

the interacting group. Consequently affecting the disposition of every members of society to different social relation. It is reflective in that interaction involves a critical appraisal of situation in societies. Lastly, it is historical that is, there awareness of a more remote past which consciously experienced, affects individuals interaction.

FORMS OF SOCIAL INTERACTION

Forms of social relationships that seems universal and basic to mankind are as follows:

1. Cooperation
2. Conflict
3. Competition
4. Coercion
5. Exchange

COOPERATION

This refers to the relationship in which people or groups act together in order to promote common interest or shared goals, thereby achieving those goals that otherwise might have been difficult or impossible individually. Survival in society can hardly be possible without cooperation. We band together for protection against foreign attack, to meet environmental threats such as floods, famine, diseases etc. Four main kinds of cooperation have been identified, the oldest and the most universal being spontaneous cooperation. This arises out of the needs and possibilities of a situation such as witnesses to an accident and jointly giving aid to the injured. Where this kind of cooperation is repeated, thereby becoming age-old custom passed from generation to generation, it becomes traditional cooperation most often in primitive tribe or medieval village. In modern societies, we rely heavily on contractual cooperation where people or groups agree to cooperate in certain explicit ways with the obligation of each clearly spelt out, this is the common form of group formation. Similarly, a relationship of cooperation may have other elements as well. Here, while cooperation occurs, competition is also engendered. For example, where teams agree to

compete in a tournament to promote international unity and performing psychological functions for spectators.

CONFLICT

The society's interaction are not always cordial, there are disagreement and possibility of resolving them. That is, conflict is a process of interaction in which two or more person struggle with one another for some commonly priced objects or values. The defeat of an opponent is seen as essential for achieving the desired goals. Conflict arises because benefits and rewards in society are scarce leading to clash of interest arising from efforts of members to subdue one another. Conflict may take many forms. Fractional strife within groups, litigation, that is, those handle legally and settled by law court and conflict of impersonal ideas. Some philosophers have said that conflict is a problem caused by faulty social organisations and that under a perfect social system, it may not arise. This may however not be possible because there is hardly any social environment where all desirable are not in short supply because conflict are so often ended in sadness, destruction, violence or even death. Hence, we often create a negative view of it. Contrarily, some functions of conflict have been identified and as such, eliminating conflict may result to killing the society.

COMPETITION

This may be thought of as cooperative conflict. The fact remains that without competition, the society will be very dull. Competition as used here can either be positive or negative. Here, individuals or groups struggle to reach the same goal been sought rather than towards a competitor. To prevent competition from degenerating into conflicts, it is necessary for the parties to agree ahead of time on the rules of the game and then cooperate on such rules e.g. football tournament, market economy as well as interaction taking place within the school system. Competition is a wide form of social interaction in stable modern societies to promote sense of belonging, reducing anomie, creating form of unity as well as exchange of ideas.

COERCION

In the interaction process within the social system, the possibility of a person or group forcing its will on another may rise. This ultimately rests on the threat of physical force or violence as a means of achieving certain goals or objectives. Where this is the case, people are said to be coerced.

Although it may sometimes be much more soft than the open threats of physical force. At first glance, coercion may not seem like a true relationship as it appears to be one sided as if the coercer does the acting and the coerced just sit and letting things happen. But in reality, both do interact and this is because, the response from the coerced in forms of indifference, apathy or anger will affect the coercer who may feel guilty, self satisfied or afraid and as the case may be, decides to retrace his steps. Like conflict, coercion is usually viewed as a negative kind of relationship, this however may not be so as it serves definite social function. It is a major tool in the socialization process thus generating conformity with societal norms and values.

EXCHANGE

When one person acts in a certain way towards another for the purpose of receiving a reward or return, we call such relationship an exchange relationship. Most employees/employer relationships are of this type. The employee behaves in a certain way that accords with the wishes of the employer and he is rewarded with salary for his action, however, exchange goes for those goals based on money or goods as rewards. Many are based on subjective emotional rewards. For example, when you show love and care to someone you may not expect reward from in form of money or goods but the gratitude and affection. In his book "Exchange and Power in social life", Peter Blau (1964) established that exchange relationship based on gratitude are extremely important components of social life. In many casual relationships, the trade of an action for gratitude appreciation is the basic motivation. By and large, there is no doubt that in maintaining social order anyone or a combination of some or all of the above forms of social

relationship needs to be put in place. Since social order guarantees equal opportunity to things that will make life more worth living.

SOCIAL INTERACTION IN WORK ORGANISATIONS

The existence of social interaction is not only limited within the context of societies alone, they are also found in the work organisations. This stems from the fact that the primary rationale for the existence of an organisation is for the attainment of certain corporate goals which can be achieved only through the concerted effort of individuals. These individuals, have jobs which require them to interact with other employees even when this is not the case, they still interact with fellow employees during lunch break or other non-worktime. One result of this interaction is that these employees tend to cluster together in groups. More often than not, the behaviour of an individual employee can be understood in the context of small groups in which he works.

More so, a relation may hold between a person and a group. Just as a relation may hold between two groups. Thus, the existence of groups in an organisation leads to shared common goals, values, norms and conformity. People form a group for an opportunity and a reason for them to interact. On this note, social interaction in an organisation results in the formation of two types of groups. That is, formal group where most employees are members of a group based on their position in the organisation while informal group on the other hand, are groups of employees that associate on a fairly continuous basis. Here, there is the tendency for employee to act differently from those norms required by the organisation. Management labour relations as a feature of social interaction has been exhaustively explained in chapter fourteen of the book.

CHAPTER THREE

SOCIAL STRUCTURE, ITS MEANING AND IMPORTANCE.

WHAT IS SOCIAL STRUCTURE?

The term social structure is an abstract concept and the basic component of social- cultural systems which combine social roles into a consistent system of social interaction. This reverse to the network of relationships among the members of a society.

These relationship makes it possible for the members to satisfy their own individual needs as well as the system-needs of the society. Social structure is viewed as an organizational and behavioural product of the interaction of culture and genetics. In fact, the basic building blocks in every social structure are individuals who make up the society and the roles they fill. It however expresses the idea that people interact in roles in some systematic way.

In more concrete terms, social structure or organisation refers to the orderly or patterned ways that people and group relate with each other. To call such relationship structure or organised does not necessarily mean they have been planned in advance, for this is not often the case. However, it should be noted that there is no social relationship in any society that in theory at least cannot be changed by the actions of the people making up the society. Hence, it may be more accurate to call social structure a process rather than a fixed thing or an end product. There are many relatively enduring qualities of this so called social structure. New babies are born, they grow up, some go to school, some drop out, some make new friends, formation of groups as well as emergence of new roles. Each person being a member of society knows how to behave and relates to others leading to a predictable patterns of behaviour even where conflict arises, it could also be highly patterned or predictable.

It is the social structure that permits us to undertake most of the activities of everyday's life because we do not have to think of how to treat our teachers or sisters because we have already known how we should behave to them. Therefore, through knowledge of social structure we are able to predict and understand human actions.

Again, it has also been found useful to distinguish different levels of social structure and patterning.

Generally, three levels are described. The social relation level, that is between two person. The group or organizational level, that is, the process and structure of organised group. And lastly, level of community or society that is, the social environment of all groups and organisation. Hinkle and Hinkle in their book "The Development of Modern Sociology" argues that the group and the society are nothing more than cluster of relations between two persons represents the basic unit of human social structure.

Most sociologists however hold the opinion that organized group and society also possess special group of process which emerge as they came together. These groups laws, actions and patterns of organizations are in a sense stamped on the minds of individuals member of the group who view them something external to them to be taken account of, and to wish they must mold their actions in line with the group in which you find yourself.

For this reasons, sociologists think of a separate group level of social reality apart from the individual of the society. A useful way to express this social reality is through a better understanding of a concept of social system which is a set, conceived of as a social unit and cultural unit distinct from the particular persons who composed the set. Social system could refer to any kind of social groupings from a group of two friends to a large complex society. It is formal by the way in which individuals in a society behave and interact. Taken altogether, the various structure (family, education and political economy etc.) form the social system (Shabi, 1999). It is widely used in sociology because it forces us to think of the way in which social

pieces fits together into a whole and identifying the basic similarities in all forms of social interaction. We can look at the family and compare it with a football team or a secondary school and a business corporation. The fact that each is a social unit in which people are pursuing a special set of goals depending upon one another in various ways and sharing a sense of common identity as a group. Central to a better appreciation and operation of the social structure and system is culture in which those elements that guide actions are embedded. It is because of the differences in cultural elements of societies that we have variations in the structure of human relationships. The existence of marked differences in norms found in societies raises that not only the scientific question of how to account for social and cultural diversity. It also poses ethical and moral questions or problems.

One may therefore want to ask why do people everywhere tends to consider their own beliefs and values as absolute?

With the marked differences in the rules and values governing family life, sexual behaviour, politics, economic activities, religious rituals e.t.c can there be only absolute standard? In the light of this, Sumner (1969) wrote that within any social structure, the mores are embedded in the culture and can make anything right or wrong. In Nigeria, the story is not different, for there are many diverse cultural elements which makes it more difficult to agree upon a unified system of values and beliefs. Where this is the case, it is then true that whatever cultural elements that dominates a given social structure are considered to be the most appropriate for such structure or society and may not be questioned.

Considered the practice where a certain group of people in the country approved of their female children getting married early while another group may frowned at it again in another social environment, young ones are expected to prostrate greeting elders while in another it is not necessary, yet life continues in both situation. At this juncture, we may equally considered the SAMOANS or Triobriand Islanders in the issue of pre-marital sexual exploration which serves a particular purpose for their social engineering. In Nigeria or else where it is not the norm and it

is seriously frowned at. Hence, whatever may be the pivot on which elements of social relations rest or better still, the determinant of the operation of the social system or structure, could be viewed some the point of cultural relativity. Therefore, one important conclusions upon which there may be considerable agreement is that each society with its norms and values is only one of many people of change in various directions and it is a product of mans effort to come to terms with the world around him and with the needs of an on-going social order.

Despite all the diverse structured elements of societies, we still have social uniformities in form of speech, material acts, property ownership, the use of scarce resources, power and authority structure etc. One may therefore come to agree that there is a brotherhood of social life in which all societies still share some survival imperatives. What we then have, is the degree and patterns for the Nigerian situation, all social environment are replete with politics, struggle for power, marriage system, social roles and status differentiation to keep the society moving.

THE NORMATIVE SYSTEM: A CROSS CULTURAL APPROACH

Human society will not be possible, without rules or conducts or standards of proper behaviour. These rules and the way they are enforced are referred to as normative system. The important components of this system are the norms, values, roles and sanctions. Also, the part played by social roles cannot be underestimated. Each of these components are explained albeit briefly as follows:

NORMS

This term or concept is used by sociologist to mean any role or standard which defines what people should do or what they should not do, think or feel in any given situation. Although, individuals, families or small groups may have many private norms of their own. The most significant ones are those commonly held by a large segment of the society. Norms are rules

which a society believe should be obeyed unless otherwise stated. It is a "natural forces" in social engineering. There are however two basic types:

The Statistical norms

The Cultural norms

The statistical norm is the "Real norm" and the cultural norm is the "ideal". In this context, "real" is the ones practice while "ideal" is the expected ways.

The former (statistical norm) refers to what actually exist or a measure of actual conduct with no suggestion of approval or otherwise. While the latter refers to a set of behavioural expectations and a cultural image of how people are supposed to act. It is the cultural norms that, concerns a sociologist. That is, when and where people should eat, how, where and what you say under different conditions. Different societies have found varieties of workable patterns in resting living from nature. A group may eat in privacy while another prefers public, some eat with fingers while others with some utensils. Some eat while standing, squatting or sitting. Through trial and error, sheer accident or a kind of unknown influence, a group arrives at one of this possibility, repeats it and accepts it as particular ways of meeting their needs.

However, norms may vary in their importance to society and this gives rise to the dichotomy of folkways and mores that form the component of a norm. For folkways, it is merely the conventional practise accepted as appropriate but not insisted upon. A folkway is therefore the customary normal habitual way a group does things, little non-conformity could easily be tolerated, it is sometimes called social custom. A non-conformist may only be looked upon as eccentric or merely a staunch individualist who refuses to be boned by conventions. Breaking folkways may not have a serious negative social effects. For example, eating with left hand may pose no serious effect. In the words of Perry and Perry (1962).

...as a culture changes, folkways change with it: old ones are discarded and new ones are added ...

For mores, they are norms which are strongly sanctioned and conformity is enforced in various ways. Failure to conform elicit moral disapproval and frequently negative sanctions. These are particular ways of life that must be followed because they are belief to be essential to group live and welfare. Therefore, mores are those norms embedded in what members of society consider to be morality. Mores come from past and also change with time, meaning those ideas of right and wrong which requires certain act and forbids others. Members of a society normally share a sublime faith that violation of their mores will bring disasters upon them. Such an act is therefore forbidden. As such, various examples abound across cultures. Incest taboos in ancient Egypt are frowned upon. Mores are not deliberately or thought up or worked out because someone decides they will be functional rather, they emerge gradually out of customary practices. They may later becomes self-validating and self-perpetuating. Mores do change as adaptation to changing circumstances with conscious effort or former attempt, refer to as "CRESCIVE CHANGE". Some changes may be deliberate which are guaranteed through enacted laws.

VALUES

These are ideas by which men lives. Ideas about what are good or right or wise or beneficial, more abstract and less specific than norms. A value is a general belief that something is good or bad. It stresses what is important, worthwhile and what striving for. Again, it could be referred to as the standard by which people define their goals, select a cause of action as well as judging themselves with others. Values are not specific rules for action but general precept to which men give their allegiance and about which they are likely to have strong feelings. Values are not only lofty but also quite general and they vary from one to the other.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VALUES AND NORMS

A close relationship exist between values and norms and sometimes interwoven such that it becomes difficult to distinguish one from the other and to determine which one preceeds the other. However, a deep exploration of the social structures reveals that norms preceeds values in any situation. For example, basic values in modern societies such as achievement, success, progress, material comfort and equality do not develop from nowhere instead they are developed, reinforced and change through day to day behaviours regulated by norms. It is obvious here that values are a kind of after thought, that is, explanation by which the already plant norms of a society are claimed to be desirable because since norms are simply habits developed over a period of years and to justify their continuation or perhaps to concede their ultimate irrationalities, people in such society invent explanation of the reason why things are done that way. In summary, values and norms are related. Values justify the norms. Values is the bases for many norms and they are considered to be more abstract and less specific than norms.

ROLES

Central to the analysis of organised social interaction is the concept of roles usually referred to as the part or pattern of behaviour which one is expected to play in any social interaction. Therefore, in any given situation, one is expected to know the demanded role. There is **inter-personal role** -which is the way an individual personality tends to react to a social situation. Again, there is also a **(social role)** which is a set of expectations and way of behaving associated with a specific position in a social system or a set of expectations governing the person's holding a particular position in a society, that is, a set of norms that defines how persons in a particular position should behave or not behave. Some may be highly detailed as in specialised work roles or broad and elastic as the case of roles in the family. There is also **Ideal role or prescribed** and **Actual role performance**. The former refers to what and how the role performance should do while the latter refers to what is actually in contract to how they are supposed to behave.

The problem of role confusion may arise as a result of:

- (1) Imperfect understanding of the expected roles.
- (2) Personal inadequately where a person does not always do exactly what his roles call for.

The principal importance of a role is to prescribed the way in which one individual should behave towards another in the course of their interaction to one another. It should be noted that roles does not only regulate behaviour but also enable us to predict the action of others and therefore guide our actions in an orderly manner. A complete set of roles associated with a single status is called a "**Role set**". Furthermore, there is the need for a role performer to balance the demands of his various roles. Where this is not possible because of action is referred to as **role conflict or role incompatibility** (contradictory demands within a role).

In some cases, a kind of role conflict between two causes of actions may be built into a single one. A good example is that of a military officer. To be successive, he must be kind and must have the affection of his fellow men and trust because he is asking them to risk their lives at his wealth but at the same time he is an authority figure that must be obeyed. Hence, he behaved in a way that appear stern and uncompromising. The sort of opposing demands is referred to as Role inconsistency or Role strain that is, difficulty in meeting ones role obligation and expectations.

SANCTIONS

It is obvious that a society must have some ways to enforce its norms to make the individual behave according to the rules even when it is difficult or unpleasant for individual to do so. This is done through the pressure of sanctions. Sanctions are rewards and penalties by members of a group that are used to regulate an individual's behaviours. Moreso, sanctions may be applied officially or otherwise. Sanctions are applied officially through formerly organised authority and in fact may be the last resort after series of unofficial sanctions must have failed to achieve the desired results.