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CONFERENCE OF CULTURAL ASSESSMENT

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Bob Klitgaard
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CULTURAL ASSESSMENTS

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CULTURAL ASSESSMENTS

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1. AN OVERVIEW OF SORTS

Robert Klitgaard

It is difficult to underestimate the practical importance and intellectual interest of the research reported at our workshop. Consider these breakthroughs concerning the cultural dimensions of "development":

- The rigorous documentation of the importance of civic cultures to the quality of government in Italy.

- The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to show that the "fit" between traditional institutions and modern structures distinguishes "successful" and "unsuccessful" Native American reservations.

- The demonstration using anthropological research that minorities' self-definition plays a strong role in determining their academic success.

- The successful testing of a new "cultural theory" to help explain attitudes toward risk, the management of resources, and strategies for overcoming poverty.

- The application of market research techniques, in combination with anthropological data-gathering, to problems of rural development.

- New studies of African success stories that emphasize the roles of indigenous institutions.

- One of the first applications of the cross-cultural information in an anthropological "data bank" to a practical problem of development policy.

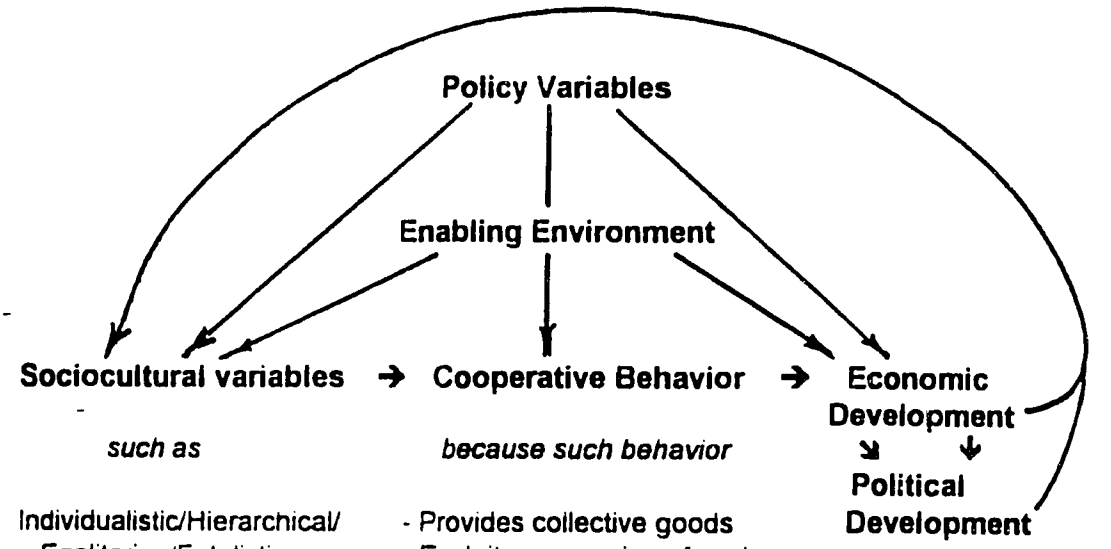
- New efforts to apply sociocultural knowledge in the work of development agencies.

And there is more! One of our less restrained participants puts it this way: we are on the verge of a renaissance in applied sociocultural studies.

The workshop's participants include anthropologists, economists, policy analysts, political scientists, and sociologists; several have been privileged to enjoy wide experience in development activities. For the most part we were strangers to each other. We are excited to discover that diverse and independent lines of research on the sociocultural foundations of development share many theoretical and practical concerns.

We also share a hope: that such knowledge will help people avoid some of the mistakes of the past, resulting in better policies, processes, and management systems. Michael Cernea, Mamadou Dia, Scarlett Epstein, and Allen Hoben recount the failures of many development policies because mistaken assumptions were made about local attitudes and institutions. Unfortunately, as Dia points out, there are few success stories that

Figure 1
SCHEMATIC RELATIONSHIPS AMONG SOCIOCULTURAL VARIABLES, COOPERATIVE BEHAVIOR, POLICIES, AND DEVELOPMENT



such as

Individualistic/Hierarchical/Egalitarian/Fatalistic
Density and types of indigous institutions
Various anthropological variables
"Cultural complexity"
Attitudes toward accumulation/leisure/consensus/display

because these attributes

- Facilitate communication and bargaining
- Reduce transactions and screening costs
- Enable enforcement of contracts
- Help in mobilizing resources
- Provide shared meanings and identity

because such behavior

- Provides collective goods
- Exploits economies of scale
- Provides insurance
- Supplies social services
- Strengthens identity, autonomy, and responsibility

demonstrate the opposite proposition, that by better comprehending local cultures, changes in policies, processes, or management lead to success. (A research program he is supervising begins to address this lack.) We need to analyze the interactions among sociocultural conditions and policy variables. We must share our emerging results with citizens and policy makers, as well as researchers in a variety of disciplines.

A common theme is *cooperation*. Many of us are trying to understand how "cultures" provide the framework within which cooperation occurs, sometimes a lot of cooperation and sometimes a little, sometimes quite successfully (efficiently, equitably) and sometimes less so. (See Figure 1.) Stephen Cornell/Joseph Kalt and Robert Putnam summarize theoretical work in economics, game theory, and political science (and other fields), which reveals renewed interest in norms, institutions, and cooperation. Karl Dake and his collaborators have boldly shown how their cultural theory fits with the evolution of social theory in Western social science--and how their work advances that evolution.

Fortunately, the new wave of applied sociocultural studies is not just theoretical. The best investigators understand that empirical research is needed. They recognize that certain obstacles to past sociocultural research need transcending--for example, the self-imposed goal of understanding every single aspect of a local community, an impossible task, or as Epstein reminds us, the illusory objective of perfect measurement. Alas, our understanding of sociocultural settings will always be incomplete and imprecise. And yet, as recent research shows, even an imperfect understanding can sometimes make a big difference to the way problems are defined and solutions sought: for example, as mentioned, Putnam's demonstration that good government in Italy depends on the degree and type of associational life, Cornell/Kalt's finding that cultural variables predict which Indian tribes succeed economically and which don't, the results of Dake *et al.* that cultural classifications predict a variety of behaviors ranging from attitudes toward risk to ways of managing resources, and John Ogbu's demonstration that self-definitions in ethnic groups matters to academic success.

Nonetheless, speaking in general, applied sociocultural studies seem to lag in quantitative sophistication. One does see welcome movement toward quantification in the work of Putnam, Cornell/Kalt, and Dake *et al.* But the empirical foundations of sociocultural research often seems elementary and at times unsophisticated in measurement theory, compared with, say, psychology, medicine, or soil science. At our workshop we discover that little quantitative information is available about the various measures of sociocultural conditions that researchers use, such as their reliability, costs of collection, and validity for various predictive purposes. In applied sociocultural studies, neither researchers nor practitioners now possess guidelines regarding the construct and predictive validity of the various sociocultural dimensions advocated by the different researchers. A critic (for example, Mancur Olson or, from a different perspective, Cernea) may correctly say that current concepts and measures are in a primitive state.

To remedy this situation, we need empirical research that experiments with various and diverse sociocultural measures. Moreover, as Cernea and others argue, this emerging field requires hard-nosed, skeptical, professional research. Several valuable suggestions and research agendas are emerging: for example, the "cultural audit" of Dake *et al.*, Melvin Ember's idea of using existing bodies of ethnographic research such as the Human Relations Area Files, Epstein's proposal for a new round of standardized ethnographic research on a dozen societies, Putnam's emphasis on "social capital," and Cornell and

Kalt's continued exploration of the "matches" between traditional institutions and modern structures of governance.

We unexpectedly find some good news on the empirical front. Putnam's various sociocultural measures turn out to correlate highly. Dake's various questions produce well-defined cultural types. Similar results hold for Geert Hofstede's work and perhaps for the research of Cornell/Kalt; with regard to Epstein's variables or Ogbu's research, one does not yet have the data to say. The findings of high intercorrelations among various measures is welcome. When various pieces of information are highly correlated, it means that if you know one or two of them, you know quite a bit about the others. And so, we can usefully if always incompletely move ahead with any of a variety of pieces of information, some that may already exist and others that we may collect.

But in other ways, we find that the very notion of *sociocultural variables* needs amplification. Ogbu asks that research distinguish different ways that local groups interpret the same phenomena, such as educational success, discipline, authority figures, and development. Hoben urges that "local social theories" be tapped as well, a suggestion echoed by Ogbu: for example, what is the folk theory for how people get ahead? Alberta Arthurs recommends that humanists be invited to help interpret, revise, and complexify "sociocultural variables."

We conclude with feelings of excitement, of great promise, but we recognize the need to do more. We are conscious of the novelty and potential value of the emerging work, but we see many gaps that need filling.

In particular, we must confront measurement even more assiduously. We have too little systematic evidence about the reliability and validity of the various sociocultural variables we study. Indeed, even where we can show that "culture matters" (in various senses), we would like to be able to say more about how much it matters, compared with other factors. In the parlance of psychology, what are the "effect sizes"? With what other variables "held constant"?

We recommend broadening the geographical scope of the new sociocultural research. We need to test the new hypotheses and measures in other contexts--in particular, given the importance of the developmental challenges there, in the most destitute parts of the world.

We have learned to our surprise that much research is proceeding in parallel, or even in isolation. We believe that interdisciplinary exchanges like our workshop have great value. We are eager to deepen these exchanges. One idea is a larger, more formal workshop where we would prepare papers for an audience including academics, humanists, and policy makers from many countries. We hope that a broader audience would help refine concepts and think creatively about crucial practical questions, such as this one: "Suppose you are right about the importance of the sociocultural dimensions of development. Now what?"

2. Background Notes for a Workshop

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"It Depends on the Local Sociocultural Conditions."
What Does? On Which Conditions? Assessed How?

Robert Klitgaard

Suppose you have a limited amount of time and money but nonetheless wish to have information about the "sociocultural conditions" in several local settings in the developing world. What would you want to know? How would you go about knowing it? And how might the information you would collect be helpful to local people and policymakers?

These are some of the questions we will be addressing in our two days together. We will emphasize the second: How certain data about sociocultural conditions can be collected with what reliability, validity, and costs.

But before we begin our work, let's undertake a few intellectual warm-up exercises, in hopes of avoiding pulled muscles later.

Analogies from Psychology, Soil Science, and Medicine

"Your questions don't make sense without knowing more about the problem. What you want to know about the local sociocultural setting depends on what you're trying to do or predict.

"Anyway, you can't measure culture. And cultural conditions aren't static or uniform. So from the start these questions are at best contestable, at worst meaningless."

Good points. But to capture the spirit of a slightly different response, let's rephrase our three questions above for three other fields, psychology, soil science, and medicine.

> *Suppose you have a limited amount of time and money but nonetheless wish to have information about*
> *(a) [for the psychologist] the personalities of several individuals*
> *(b) [for the soil scientist] soil conditions in several local settings*
> *(c) [for the physician] the health of several individuals.*

Our first question above is, *With limited time and money, what would you want to know about these things?* One immediate answer, a good reflex, is "It depends. What is the purpose of the inquiry? There is no one right answer."

Upon hearing which a psychologist might nod and say, "Good point, you're right. But you know, it turns out that for many purposes having data on what turn out to be a few of a potentially infinite number of variables is quite helpful. For example, measured intelligence, field dependent-independent, masculinity/feminity scale, stable/neurotic scale, perhaps the Meyers-Briggs test, and if there's time and money, the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory."

A soil scientist might continue in a similar vein. "It does depend, of course. But in my field, too, there are some few crucial aspects of soils that are pretty easy to study and turn out to be important for a variety of agricultural decisions."

And a physician might say, "What I'd like to know would depend, but my basic data would include blood pressure, pulse, height, weight, and age, and a half dozen more pieces of readily available information--answers to a series of questions about what hurts and what's changed, what I hear with my stethoscope in a quick listen to the heart and chest, and so forth."

Our imaginary experts in these three fields would probably add that collecting such basic data would not replace careful interviewing, nor would having basic data preclude the addition of other information depending on the problem at hand. If asked whether these basic data somehow "summarized" or "measured" a person, soil sample, or medical situation, all of our experts would laugh and say, "Of course not. These are simply useful data that assist us in making diagnoses in a highly imperfect world, so that the people we are studying can make better decisions."

Our second question is: *How would you go about knowing it?* Ideally, we wan to know how the desired information is obtained, and the resulting data's reliability, validity, and costs.

Our psychologist would have a lot to say. The field of psychometrics studies the statistical properties of various psychological constructs. Practicing psychologists would be acutely aware of the costs of data collection, ranging from low in the case of short paper-and-pencil tests to high in the case of information obtained through psychotherapy.

Detailed answers would also be forthcoming from the soil scientist and physician. For example, an ideal physician would understand the properties of each test he could give to a patient--its reliability (surprisingly low in the case of blood pressure), validity (in the sense of how well it measures the theoretical construct it purports to represent), and cost. Indeed, in the professional education of psychologists, soil scientists, and physicians, the question of information gathering and analysis takes (or should take) center stage.

Our third question is: *How might the information you would collect be helpful to local people and policymakers?* The question might be answered in some general way: "By helping people understand themselves, their soil, and their medical condition." True. Or: "By reminding people of the importance of personality, soil, medical differences." Also true. But our hypothetical experts would add further points.

The psychologist: "Let me give you a few examples about how this basic information would be useful. If I have even a rough psychological profile, I can help my clients understand the kinds of jobs they are likely to enjoy. We have data on the kinds of personalities that thrive in various professions. My clients can still decide to whatever they want, but it can be useful information to them. In pedagogy, it's been shown that university students with high anxiety and relatively low intelligence do better with highly structured curricula, while students with low anxiety and relatively high intelligence learn more through pedagogies that are less structured.

Another example: policymakers might allocate more funds to youngsters with certain identified psychological profiles, in hopes of helping them before their problems become ingrained."

The soil scientist: "I advise farmers concerning the kinds of crops that will grow best in soils like theirs. Also, I help them evaluate ways of treating the soils. For example, they should use nitrogenous fertilizers in some kinds of soils, and phosphatic fertilizers in others. In some soil conditions, contour planting will be worth the effort, whereas in others it won't. Farmers take my advice and use it in their own decisionmaking. To be helpful, I must offer more than just a set of data on the type of soil they have--I have to say how soil types interact with different plants and with different soil treatments.

"Policymakers may want to know about soil types because they may use such information in their allocation of resources, say for irrigation or fertilizer, or in programs to educate farmers to adopt certain crops or certain soil treatments."

The physician: "The basic medical information I collect helps me with diagnoses, when I combine that information with what the patient tells me. Often, I then make further, detailed tests and assessments of the particular patient's condition. The information is useful in prescriptions as well as diagnosis. Obviously, the prescriptive recommendations I make depend not only on the illness I diagnose but also on the patient's general physical condition. Such data can also help me advise patients about preventive strategies suited for their particular situations--exercise, diet, and so forth. A lot of medicine is about changing those 'underlying variables.'"

In Contrasts: The Study of Sociocultural Conditions

These warm-up exercises suggest useful kinds of answers that we might seek in our studies of sociocultural variables. Unlike psychology, soil science, and medicine, in the fields of sociocultural studies "garden-variety" answers to our three questions remain general and unhelpful.

"Which cultural variables would I like to have? It depends. What problem are you working out? Tell me that and maybe I can help you." After the person is told which questions, the answers remain highly schematic. "The main thing is not to assume that all cultures are the same, or even that any one so-called culture is static and homogenous. Look at all the differences! Glory in them! Don't assume that what works in one place will work in another. Be humble!" And so forth: but seldom is a description supplied of which specific data should be collected with regard to a particular practical issue or class of issues.

Moreover, many students of culture feel compelled to belabor the truth that no set of data can ever enable someone to *define*, *comprehend*, or somehow *capture* a culture; also, the points that cultures are not static but change, that cultures are not uniform or monolithic. Although logically similar points hold for personality, soil, and medical condition they do not in these fields tend so to preoccupy researchers nor to forestall conceptual and empirical research. [1]

[1] It is an interesting, but perhaps for this meeting distracting, question why these differences exist across fields of study. I have tried to analyze some of the reasons in "On Culture and Development," *Theoria*, No. 78, October 1991, and "In Search of Culture" (Washington, DC.: The World Bank, July 1991).

Regarding the second questions, about data collection, there is no substitute for ethnography, for detailed understanding. This often means *not* having a preconceived idea of what we need to know. We have to go in with open minds and a great sensitivity. Our business as students of sociocultural settings is what Clifford Geertz calls *thick description.*" True, but are there no data that, inevitably partial and inexact, would be attainable in a shorter time and which would advance understanding and prediction?

And when it comes to our third question, some students of culture would instinctively recoil. "How would this information be used? The only use I hope for is greater understanding, not only of the Other but of the Self. We need to put culture at the center of our intellectual awareness, as something beyond material determination. As far as policymakers go, I don't trust them at all."

These stereotyped answers are provocative exaggerations. But I hope that comparing them with the (more favorably) stereotyped answers of the psychologist, soil scientist, and physician makes a point. And that it suggests some issues we should discuss together.

Question 1. What Sociocultural Information Would We Like?

The distinguished participants in this workshop are anything but "garden variety" students of culture. This is a botanical garden of rare and valued specimens! All have made an effort to specify "sociocultural conditions" that matter across of range of problems and settings. But the second point to notice, perhaps, concerns the *differences* among the sociocultural constructs that most participants have identified. Let me attempt to what your appetites for the presentations that will be made the first day of our workshop--presentations that may, I fear, correct or complexify the characterizations that follow!

T. Scarlett Epstein, for example, a wonderful hybrid of economist and anthropologist, suggests that market researchers should gather information on eleven sociocultural dimensions:

Exhibit 1
Suggested Sociocultural Information to Include in Market Research

Cultural Variable	Extremes of Possible Options	
Unit of decision making	Individual	Group
Ethos of social organization	Egalitarian	Hierarchical
Patron-client relationship	Situational	Continuous
Allocation of status	Achieved	Ascribed
Prestige criteria	Behaviour	Expenditure
Kinship structure	Patrilineal	Matrilineal
Family organization	Nuclear	Extended
Marriage arrangements	Monogamy	Polygamy
Residence pattern	Patrilocal	Uxorilocal
Gender relationship	Equality	Subordination
Land tenure	Individual	Group
Factionalism	Interest-based	Kin-based
Colonial experience	Enlightened administration	Exploitative administration

T. Scarlett Epstein, *A Manual for Culturally-Adapted Market Research (CMR) in the Development Process* (Bexhill-on-Sea, England: RWAL Publications, 1988), p. 27.

Another of our participants, **Karl Dake**, combines several disciplines in his applications based on Mary Douglas' group-grid theory of culture. Dake and Douglas and their colleagues hypothesize that every society contains a mixture of four "ways of life" or cultures: individualist, egalitarian, hierarchical, and fatalistic. Dake has developed questionnaires that resemble attitude surveys, which he uses first to classify individuals and then, by amalgamation, social groups.[2] Dake shows that different cultural groups emphasize different environmental risks.

[2] See, for example, his "Myths of Nature: Culture and the Social Construction of Risk." *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 48, No. 4, 1992.

Political scientist **Robert Putnam**'s detailed examination of Italy's experience with decentralized government has evolved, in ways perhaps unexpected by Putnam, into the study of culture's central importance for both good governance and good markets. Not eleven variables like Epstein, not four categories like Dake, but two categories of culture emerge in Putnam's work: "horizontal" versus "vertical" civic associations. His measures: the density of free associations (his archetype is the choral society) and whether such associations tend to be organized horizontally or vertically.[3]

The World Bank's **Mamadou Dia** takes a different cut at cultural differences. His concern: Africa's cultures have been misunderstood by the West (and perhaps by Africa's own leaders), leading to failed policies and projects. Citing the work of French scholar Jacques Binet on "economic psychology" in 56 African tribes as well as his own experience, Dia identifies several Western assumptions that are often invalid in African cultures.[4] Africans tend to differ from Westerners in their attitudes toward savings and investment, authority, commitment, and labor. Africans tend to:

- Favor conspicuous social consumption and income redistribution over accumulation and reinvestment. . . . Very little value is attached to self-control.
- Need . . . ritual formality to reinforce commitment/obligation.
- [Prefer] compromise over litigation. . . . In legal as well as political matters, the Africans seek unanimity and are prepared to engage in interminable discussions to achieve it. . . . This is the complete opposite of the spirit that imbues western law, where the judge interprets the law and pronounces a sentence to which the parties have to submit willy-nilly.
- Value group solidarity and occasions of socializing [which] has generally led to attaching a high value to leisure and the attendant ability to engage in social activities. . . . Farmers' responses [to income incentives] are likely to be positive only if the expected increase of output/income will materialize soon, but also will be rather striking. . . . Time . . . horizons are still generally very short.

Dia emphasizes the ways that indigenous institutions intermediate between the demands of the economy and the market and these cultural values and attitudes. He is leading a remarkable

[3] Robert Putnam, with Robert Leonardi and Raffaella Y. Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

[4] Mamadou Dia, "Indigenous Management Practices: Lessons for Africa's Management in the '90s," in *Culture and Development in Africa*, Vol. I, ed. Ismail Serageldin and June Tabaroff (Washington, D.C..: The World Bank, 1992). Among his references to Binet is Jacques Binet, *Psycholigie économique africaine* (Paris: Payot, 1970).

multi-year, interdisciplinary research program to verify these cultural differences and to examine how indigenous institutions and successful management innovations may have dealt with them.

Social psychologist **Stephen Cornell** and economist **Joseph Kalt** together comprise another rare phenomenon, a duo doing truly interdisciplinary, quantitative research on culture and policy. In their series of studies of Native American tribes, they find that "unless there is a fit between the culture of the community and the structure and powers of its governing institutions, those institutions may be seen as illegitimate, their ability to regulate and organize the development process will be undermined and development will be blocked."[5] The "fit" that matters is between traditional and imposed institutions in the executive, legislative, and judicial areas. In addition, the cultural variables that matter for Indian development include a tribe's degree of hierarchy, its members' "receptivity to interaction with non-members" of the tribe (p. 55), attitudes toward resource use, and "the degree to which tribal members' primary source of identity and loyality is the tribe as a whole, as opposed to sub-tribal organizations" (p. 57).

Anthropologist **Melvin Ember** is the head of the Human Relations Area Files in New Haven. This unique library and compendium of ethnographic materials has been the basis of a new wave of quantitative, comparative studies of cultural variables. Among the findings is that a "scale of cultural complexity" (actually, several possible scales) does a good job statistically of "ordering" a large number of the world's cultures. Moreover,

> cultural complexity turns out to predict a large amount of cultural variation in many realms of life that are not obviously related to complexity. These include: house shape; mode of marriage; relative status of men versus women; emphasis and techniques used in child training; sexual restrictiveness; religious beliefs; religious practices; games; design features of art; song style; and dance style. In addition, related to complexity in curvilinear fashion are: type of family; type of marriage; bilateral descent; and positive treatment of the aged.[6]

Using a different research approach, anthropologist **John Ogbu** has studied the academic performance of different ethnic groups in Stockton, California. He finds, among other things, that seemingly objective "cultural" categories like Hispanic should be decomposed. Students whose parents recently immigrated to the United States do much better in school than students whose parents came here long ago. The latter tend to see themselves differently in cultural

[5] "Reloading the Dice: Improving the Chances for Economic Development on American Indian Reservations," Project Report Series, Malcom Wiener Center for Social Policy, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, March 1992, pp. 8-9.

[6] Carol R. Ember and David Levinson, "The Substantive Contributions of Worldwide Cross-Cultural Studies Using Secondary Data," *Behavior Science Research*, Vol. 25, Nos. 1-4 (1991), pp. 80-1.

terms, as a kind of caste. One implication is that a person's definition of his or her culture matters as much as "objective" membership in a cultural group.[7]

Allan Hoben has made a similar point in his recent research, emphasizing what might be called the positive side of these self-definitions of culture. Cultural variables are variables in another sense, that people reinterpret and redefine them to achieve certain ends, a point also emphasized in Stephen Cornell's earlier work. But his "using of culture" cannot be intentional and effective. "Paradoxically, the pragmatic functions of primordial symbol systems must be largely unconscious and unintended to those who believe in them. To the extent they are recognized, they tend to lose their efficiency."[8] Hoben's experience is unusually wide and deep, including a stint with USAID in the 1970s where among other things he attempted to bring anthropological perspectives to practical decisionmaking.

Michael Cernea has also bridged the gap between theory and practical application, as the senior sociological adviser in the World Bank. Like Hoben's, his many publications stress both the potential for practical application of sociocultural knowledge and the long way to go before such knowledge is codified in readily usable ways.[9]

Clearly, this is an extraordinary collection of insights about the sociocultural information that might usefully be obtained! Equally remarkable is their range. It is fair to say that we lack the kind of agreement we would find among psychologists, soil scientists, or physicians. Perhaps we do not seek or desire such agreement; perhaps there is no "basic set of sociocultural information" that serves a wide array of practical applications and theoretical questions. One objective of this workshop is to examine the reasons *why* different participants believe that different sociocultural information is important. Are different theories at work? Do the conceptions of appropriate data derive from different objectives?

A clue may be found in the apparent intellectual sources of each participant's conceptualization of cultural variables. Exhibit 2 attempts this for a set of our participants, but I hasten to add that these are my impressions, ready to be amended or abandoned.

Exhibit 2
Why *This* Conception of Sociolcultural Variables? Some Hypotheses

Scarlett Epstein: eleven variables drawn from ethnography, apparently variables that tend to distinguish among cultures but unclear to me why these eleven and not eight of them or fifteen others.

[7] His most recent work is *Cultural Models and Educational Strategies of Non-dominant Peoples* (New York: City College of New York, 1992).

[8] Allan Hoben and Robert Hefner, "The Integrative Revolution Revisited," *World Development*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 1991, p. 27.

[9] As, for example, in the first chapter of his edited volume *Putting People First: Sociological Variables in Rural Development*, 2d ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

Mamadou Dia: Jacques Binet's empirical research across 56 African tribes, focussing on variables that distinguish attitudes in Africa from those in the West.

The scale of cultural complexity (based on data culled from ethnographies and now codified in the Human Relations Area Files): a combination of variables that form a scale, which tends to order cultures along a continuum, and then turns out to have a surprising variety of interesting correlates.

Robert Putnam: a surprising empirical result from Italy, where this variable distinguishes politically (and economically?) successful provinces from unsuccessful ones; then the concept is connected to ideas of "civic culture" and "social capital" and to the economics of cooperation.

Stephen Cornell and Joseph Kalt: empirical observations in quasi-ethnographic study of Indian tribes and then comparative study using existing proxy variables; expressed in terms of an ad hoc combination of cultural concepts and institutional "fit," which are then connected with the economics of cooperation.

Karl Dake: grid/group theory of Mary Douglas; original application to the perception of environmental risk, now generalized to a theory of cultures.

Notice, too, that different aspects of "culture"--a notoriously plastic term--are emphasized in our participants' work. Some aspects of culture refer to *values and attitudes*. Others look at *institutions* (variously: civic, political, family, and others). Still others involve self-definitions and *beliefs*. Most participants include more than one of these "aspects"--for example, on cultural differences in values and in institutions, in the cases of Dia and Cornell and Kalt.

Thus, each of our participants has laudably attempted to go beyond "it depends" as the answer to "which variables" and specify some variables with a wide range of applications. But the answers appear divergent. Are they, in fact? What are the constructs each is trying to assess? What can we learn from each other's efforts to define important "sociocultural variables"?

Question 2. How Would We Collect Data about What We Want to Know?

Many of our participants have suggested ways to collect the information they deem important. Admittedly, however, most of us wish we knew more about the kinds of issues about the data that, say, a psychometrician might raise. Our wish list would include:

- A clear operational definition of each variable.
- A specific description of the method or methods used to collect data about the variable.
- Evidence concerning the reliability, bias, and validity of classification, scaling, or measurement.
- Information about the costs of collecting the information (or more precisely, about the relationship between costs and precision of measurement).

It is on these questions that we hope to focus much of our discussion in this workshop. Participants will describe not only their constructs (the what and why) but also their measures (the exactly what, how well, and what cost). We hope to identify here both the achievements of current research, which are often unappreciated outside of a narrow audience, and the gaps that remain. It may well turn out that similar problems are faced by researchers working with ostensibly different variables and measures, in which case cross-cutting or thematic research may be in order.

In my planned field research on cultural variation in Africa, we will have the chance to field test various protocols for obtaining information on sociocultural variables. I hope to glean from this discussion practical steps that we might take, and to offer participants the chance to piggy back their own conceptual and empirical research on our field work.

Question 3. How Might the Information We Collect Be Helpful to Local People and Policymakers?

Most of the participants have wrestled in one way or another with the practical applications of their research, but I think it is fair to say that most of us remain dissatisfied on this score.

For example, an earlier draft of Putnam's book included a last chapter filled with thoughts about the practical implications of the strong interactions he discovered between good government and civic cultures in Italy. But eventually he replaced these ruminations with a more theoretical conclusion, on the historical roots and the game-theoretical foundations of different forms of cooperation. He is now leading a group of social scientists trying to address the theoretical and practical importance of "social capital."

With regard to Dake's research, his colleagues Wildavsky and Thompson have argued that strategies for alleviating poverty should take account of the different cultures of the poor, along their two-by-two matrix. Dake has shown how culture shapes the environmental risks that people deem important and unimportant. But they have not yet shown how the poor or policymakers might use such information to design different policies for different cultural groups, or try to change those cultures--these are questions of active research.

Dia's ongoing research is already supporting the qualitative point that indigenous institutions change and bend according to both the exonomic environment and local cultural norms. It has not yet grappled with the question if the *institution by culture by policy interactions*, but these questions will be addressed. (About this mouthful, more below.)

Several of Melvin Ember's colleagues have recently applied the HRAF data set to the question, "Where has cassava farming taken off in Africa and why?" with fascinating results. (Matriarchal cultures have adapted new varieties faster than patriarchal cultures.) Ember and others are investigating the sociocultural correlates of war and ethnic strife. It is fair to say, I think, that on the question of culture by policy interactions they too are "en route" but have not yet arrived.

Cornell and Kalt have discovered significant statistical relationships among certain cultural variables and economic growth among Indian tribes, "holding constant" other variables about regional economic conditions. But they are still working on the policy ramifications of these

findings: Now that this is known, what should a given tribe do? What should the federal government do?

And so it goes, perhaps, with all of us. The participants at this workshop are distinguished by their aggressive pursuit of a few among the infinity of possible "sociocultural variables" that might provide a partial, but helpful, insight into how cultural values, institutions, and beliefs differ. The participants are also distinguished by a willingness to gather empirical data about these variables, and to test their ideas with these data across a number of settings. But I think we have just begun on questions of practical applications of sociocultural knowledge.

Focusing on Interaction Effects

In thinking about the kind of intellectual work we need, I find it helpful to return to the analogy of soil science. Many factors go into a farmer's choice of crops to grow. Preferences and customs matter. Economic conditions, such as the prices of various crops and of relevant inputs, matter. Soil conditions matter. The farmer chooses the crops to grow depending on a number of factors operating simultaneously.

The farmer knows a lot about local soils. Yet she may benefit from additional knowledge: first, from more precise scientific information about her own soil conditions, and second, from scientific knowledge about the crops that grow best in different soil and climatic conditions. Moreover, as a result of scientific information and analysis, the farmer might choose to modify the soil conditions. She might, for example, use fertilizers or employ contour planting or intercrop.

Thus, the farmer might combine scientific information about soil-by-crop interactions and about techniques to "change" soil conditions with relevant economic analysis and her own preferences and values to (1) choose crops and (2) change soil conditions to do better according to his own lights.

Now the analogy I am suggesting says that "taking soil into account" resembles "taking culture into account." Culture is the symbolic soil in which development takes place. Putnam uses a similar metaphor. But how should findings like his and his colleagues be taken into account? Suppose we know that decentralized government will fare less well in some cultural settings than in others. What is known about ways to tailor decentralization to differing cultural conditions--metaphorically, about ways to change plant varieties depending on the soil? And what is known about ways to alter those cultural conditions themselves--for example, about ways to foster the civic community?

Similar questions hold for knowledge about a society's mix of Dake's cultures, or a community's standing on Epstein's eleven variables, and so on. Shouldn't we begin to investigate how to tailor, say, credit programs or school systems or public sector incentives or anti-poverty strategies, to the mix of cultural types? And wouldn't we want to know more about how these cultural variables changes, including as a consequence of policy choices?

These examples raise general issues. Albert O. Hirschman has identified a paradigmatic tension in project design *trait-taking versus trait-making*. The former takes local attributes as given and builds projects around them. Trait-making, in contrast,
makes changing these attributes one of the goals of the project. Whatever our choice, we will face criticism.

> The dilemma of project design is then the following: if the project is planned, built, and operated on the basis of certain negative attributes of the status quo, taking them for granted is inevitable and unchangeable, it may miss important opportunities for effecting positive changes in these attributes--on the contrary, it may even confirm and strengthen them. The achievements of the project would then be far below what they might have been, and the net result could even be negative from the point of view of some "social progress function." The project planners will stand convicted as persons without imagination who do not really believe in change and perhaps do not desire it. If, on the other hand, success in the construction and operation of the project is hinged to a prior or concurrent or subsequent change in some of the attributes of backwardness, the project's fate becomes a wager. If the wager is lost, preventing the needed change and jeopardizing the project's success, the project planners will be accused of ignoring local circumstances, traditions, and sociopolitical structure and of incorrigible naivete and lack of realism in general.[10]

Obviously, both trait-taking and trait-making may be involved, depending on the case; and obviously, applying this logic to cultures is a touchy subject. In the literature I have found plenty of pronouncements about the importance of respecting culture and somehow "taking it into account." But I have found no formulation that would help us work through how to adapt a policy or process to given cultural endowments, how those endowments change (with what costs and uncertainties), and how adapting to cultures and changing them might be combined and balance.

But "taking culture into account" is analytically even more complicated than taking soil conditions into account. Consider three ways that "it depends on the local sociocultural conditions."

(1) $\text{Utility}_{C_i} = U_{C_i}$ (Development, Policies, Environment, . . .)

(2) Development = D (Policies, Environment, Culture, . . .)

(3) Culture = C (Development, Policies, Environment, . . .)

The first equation says that the social utility function under cultural conditions C_i has many dimensions--development, policy choices, the environmental conditions broadly construed, and other variables. The functional form of the utility function depends on the cultural conditions (including the possibility of different arguments in different cultures: we shall leave that in the ellipsis).

As an illustration let us turn in equation (2) to one argument of that culturally conditioned social utility function, *Development*. Imagine here some measures of economic or political development: we shall suppress our skepticism about measurement to make an analytical point.

[10] Albert O. Hirschman, *Development Projects Observed* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1967), 130-31.

Equation (2) states that development is a function of policy choices (such as type of democracy, degree and type of decentralization and economic strategies), the environment broadly construed (including natural resources and international markets), "cultural variables," and others. One task of applied cultural studies should be to specify this equation, particularly the **culture-by-policy interactions**. How do the effects of economic and other policies depend on cultural conditions?[11]

The third equation says that the cultural vector itself is a function of many things--including policy choices, development outcomes, environmental conditions, and other variables. Culture is not static but subject to change. Some of these changes are planned; many are unplanned. Some can be avoided or slowed or speeded; others cannot. Many interesting question again are empirical.

If we had such equations--where "we" means first of all local people deciding for themselves how best to speed, direct, or retard various kinds of "development"--how could we use them to make decisions?

The economist's instinct is to choose policies to maximize utility, taking cultural conditions and other variables into account. But the equations show that the maximization problem would be a complicated one indeed. In particular, look at "Culture." It is at once a dependent variable in equation (3), and independent or moderating variable in equation (2), and a giver of meaning in equation (1), in the sense that the utility function itself depends to some degree on the culture. In making choices, we must take culture into account in all these ways.

Even though farmers know their own soil conditions well, they can often benefit from the analyses and advice of soil scientists. So, too, should people "participating" in the design of their own policies and processes benefit from knowing what choices tend to work under what cultural and other conditions and how cultures themselves change as a consequence of their choices. With such knowledge in hand, they and we could rethink the choices of policies with new richness.

This framework is highly schematic. Yet I hope it is useful as a way for organizing our reflections on the third question posed above: How might sociocultural information be useful in decisionmaking? It attempts to focus our analytical attention on *interactions* among sociocultural conditions, indigenous institutions, the economic and physical environment, and policy choices.

Focal Points for Discussion

At the outset three questions were posed.

[11] The garden-variety economist can be understood as asserting that no culture by policy interactions exist: that the effect of a given policy change does not depend on any specifiable, measurable features of the sociocultural setting. A first challenge, which many of our participants have already met, is to demonstrate that such interaction effects exist.

Suppose you have a limited amount of time and money but nonetheless wish to have information about the "sociocultural conditions" in several local settings in the developing world. What would you want to know? How would you go about knowing it? And how might the information you would collect be helpful to local people and policymakers?

These issues could occupy us for weeks and months, perhaps a lifetime! And yet we have but two days, at least in this first iteration. To progress, I think we must focus, even as we discover new horizons in each other's highly varied work. And so I propose that most of our attention go to the second question, which concerns the information each of us now collects or would wish to collect about "sociocultural conditions." What methods of assessment do we use? How valid and reliable are the data we collect? How costly? What discoveries have we made about data collection and what gaps in our knowledge remain? How might field testing help to fill those gaps?

In the process we must inevitably discuss the theoretical constructs we are trying to measure--and why. We will also consider, especially on the second afternoon, how the information we collect might be incorporated in models or case studies to assess interactions among cultural variables and institutions, environments, and policies. But we will have to shortchange many theoretical and applied questions in our limited time together. We may have the opportunity to continue discussion of these crucial aspects of the problem in a follow-up conference, with a wider audience, perhaps in March 1993 in Bellagio, Italy.

3. Informal Notes on the Workshop

Robert Klitgaard

Friday Morning. "Toward a Renaissance in Applied Sociocultural Studies"

Robert Klitgaard

After the participants introduced themselves, Klitgaard presented an overview of the topic and the emphasis of this workshop. He began with a prediction. The next decade will see a **renaissance in applied cultural studies**, which will lead to a better understanding of the interactions among sociocultural conditions, the economic environment, and choices of policies and organization. The results will have not only scientific importance but also practical applicability. By taking sociocultural conditions into account, better ways will be developed to design and manage policies and processes.

Klitgaard's prediction is conditional. A prerequisite for this renaissance is **greater clarity on what *sociocultural conditions* are important and how they might be measured**.

"Culture" is a concept of notorious breadth and vagueness. It refers to an assemblage of beliefs, attitudes, institutions, and practices that imperfectly but significantly distinguish one group of people from another and are passed on, imperfectly but significantly, from one generation to the next.

Klitgaard borrowed Robert Putnam's analogy--culture is the **symbolic soil** in which institutions are planted--and pursued it. What, he asked, is the job of soil scientists? They utilize partial and incomplete measures of soil differences, which do not attempt to "capture" or "summarize" a soil area but which nonetheless may be useful to farmers in deciding (1) what crops to grow and (2) what soil treatments to undertake (e.g., fertilizer, cropping patterns, irrigation, etc.) Beyond just describing differences in soil conditions, soil scientists study the *interactions* among soil types, crops, and soil treatments. Scientific knowledge about soil-by-crop interactions, and about the costs and effects of various ways of changing soil conditions, can be vital to farmers themselves as they make decisions. Knowledge of differences among soils by itself is not of much use.

Metaphorically, **students of culture should be more like soil scientists**. One of their aims should be to provide *partial and incomplete* measures of local sociocultural conditions in order to *help local people* make better decisions. As in the case of soil science, one idea is to choose "plants" to take advantage of given "soils"--in this case, to choose policies and institutions to take advantage of local sociocultural strengths and minimize their weaknesses. But also as in the case of soil science, another idea is to treat the soils. Cultural studies have as one goal the **improvement of local choice** through a better understanding of how to take cultural conditions into account and how to change them: what Albert O. Hirschman called **"trait-taking" and "trait-making"** in project design. Such a modest aim need have no illusion of "capturing" or "summarizing" a culture. Nor should the focus be on helping outsiders understand local cultures. As with soil scientists, the aim should be to help local people make up their own decisions with the aid of cross-cultural knowledge.

Klitgaard noted that for many issues and decisions, "culture" is often not the best place to start. For example, in analyzing corruption, some analysts emphasize cultural factors as causes, but for practical purposes, it is better to consider instead the structure of incentives and information and rules, which create an "enabling environment" for illicit activities.

Nonetheless, Klitgaard cited examples where cultural differences had a great effect on the impact of policy changes: education in Hawaii and Putnam's study of Italian political decentralization.

Encouragingly, in a variety of disciplines there are signs of independent **intellectual advances** concerning "sociocultural factors." He cited the idea of social capital and how it helps frame Mancur Olson's problem of collective action; new work on corporate cultures; new approaches from economics, as exemplified in the paper by Stephen Cornell and Joseph Kalt for this workshop; and new empirical research on cultures, such as Karl Dake's.

Nonetheless, within and across academic disciplines there are many **obstacles** to more rigorous and more practical work on sociocultural variables. Academic identities are sometimes perceived to be at stake. It can become a battle of disciplinary virtue to say, for example, that cultural differences are unimportant once economic factors are correctly understood, or that culture should not be reduced to a set of variables but should be considered a holistic *fait sociale totale* (Marcel Mauss). These battles can resemble intercultural conflict, full of stereotyping, turf-protecting, and failures to communicate. He also cited as obstacles the (warranted) fear of misuse of cultural information, the sheer statistical difficulty of modeling and estimating interaction effects, and a misguided idea of policy analysis.

Scientifically, a crucial obstacle is the careful documentation of **culture-by-policy interactions**, and the clarification of theoretical constructs and their practical **measurement**. These issues are the subject of this workshop. Klitgaard's background notes for the workshop posed three questions:

> Suppose you have a limited amount of time and money but nonetheless wish to have information about the "sociocultural conditions" in several local settings in the developing world. What would you wish to know? How would you go about knowing it? And how might the information you would collect be helpful to local people and policy makers?

The second question--**how would you go about knowing sociocultural conditions?**--is the focus of our work, namely

> . . the information each of us now collects or would wish to collect about "sociocultural conditions." What methods of assessment do we use? How valid and reliable are the data we collect? How costly? What discoveries have been made about data collection and what gaps in our knowledge remain? How might field testing help to fill these gaps?"

Robert Putnam

Putnam summarized some of his research on the sociocultural preconditions of good government. He asked **why some governments work successfully** and others not--for example, compare Syria and Scandinavia. He and his colleagues asked, "Why are there marked differences in good government among the various regions of Italy since the remarkable decentralization of 1970?" The answer, they discovered, is influenced by local **civic cultures**.

Truth is a confluence of independent **streams of evidence**, and so in two decades of research on Italy, Putnam and his colleagues prospected in many river beds. For example, they undertook attitudinal research, which proved to have "lots of noise." They did case studies, interviewed élites, looked at objective measures of governmental responsiveness and performance, examined voter turnout in elections and referenda (the latter being more reliable measures of civic engagement), measured how often people came to see their representatives, and asked ordinary citizens to rate themselves on statements like "I usually obey the law, including traffic laws." In addition to various sociocultural and political variables, Putnam and his colleagues factored in economic information of various kinds. And from all this, some dramatic results emerged.

Civic culture predicts government performance. Fortunately, the streams of evidence merged in several ways. Various measures of good government correlated nicely. "Good government" in turn correlated highly with a constellation of sociocultural variables. As a mnemonic, think of **choral societies**: he greater the number of the choral societies per capita, the better the local government. Putnam ties the findings to the familiar notion of civic culture.

How, Putnam asked, can one collect data about cultures from **historical information**? One is at the mercy of the information that other people, such as governments and churches, have thought it useful to keep. Among the data available in Italy: the numbers of mutual aid societies and **voluntary associations**, including choral societies. Such data are available over time in Italy. They enable Putnam and his colleagues to show that dense and "horizontal" (as opposed to sparse and "vertically organized") civic associations predict both economic growth and good governance, rather than the other way around.

But actually, Putnam said, the story begins around 1100 AD. There are records that provide clues about the character of local administrations then, in particular absolutist versus communal republics. Those regions characterized by absolutist polities at that time were also the ones with sparse and vertically organized associational life centuries later, indeed today. There is evidence of tremendous **cultural inertia**. (This despite Putnam's finding that when people move from one region of Italy to another, they rather quickly adopt the attitudes and behavior patterns of their new region. What do these facts combined say about "cultural inertia"?)

The results have led Putnam to explore what James Coleman (crediting Glenn Loury) has called **social capital**. The networks and norms of civic engagement enable some groups to solve collective action problems easier than other groups. For example, if you and I are engaged in a thick network of horizontal associations, I will trust you to repay a loan. Thus, social capital can be translated into financial capital--and, as his research in Italy suggests, into good government.

Concerning the workshop's central question of measurement, which variables are most important? Putnam recommended collecting "some attitudinal and some behavioral" information. Most importantly, he advocated "**measures of horizontal community organizations**," such as rotating savings and credit associations, horizontal as opposed to patron-client forms of political participation, and voluntary associations of every kind.

In response to Putnam's presentation, John Ogbu cited relevant research about associational life in Africa, such as Beatty and Smith. He mentioned that the British colonial rulers of Nigeria had adopted different forms of government for the north and for the Ibos.

Mancur Olson pointed out that Putnam's work assumed that the same "plant" in terms of formal government structures was transplanted into the various provincial "soils." But perhaps the forms and structures of government were not identical. For example, in some regions the true government in the sense of coercive power is the Mafia.

Michael Cernea asked which variables were independent and which not. For example, is it possible that the propensity to form choral societies is determined by another variable, religious belief? More generally, Cernea pushed the questions of data collection and action. What information precisely would Putnam recommend collecting? And what would he recommend be done proactively? How can one invest in the "independent variables"?

Friday Morning. "Anthropological Approaches"

T. Scarlett Epstein

Epstein described some of her work with the International Committee for Development Market Research. They compile a "**cultural profile** of the community, society, or region we are targeting" in development work. The client is usually a development agency.

In this work Epstein and her colleagues have developed two sets of "key cultural indices." One set is **project specific**. One question concerns the unit of decision-making. The next concerns the presence and strength of patron-client relationships. Another concerns social mobility.

A second set of variables is **more general**. After the workshop, Epstein supplied a revised list of "general key cultural variables":

Table 1
Epstein's Revised List of Key Cultural Variables (KCVs)

Cultural Variable	Extremes of Possible Options	
Unit of decision making	Individual	Group
Patron-client relationship	Situational	Continuous
Allocation of status	Achieved	Ascribed
Prestige criteria	Behavior	Expenditure
Kinship structure	Patrilineal	Matrilineal

Family organization	Nuclear	Extended
Marriage arrangements	Monogamy	Polygamy
Residence pattern	Patrilocal	Uxorilocal
Gender relationship	Complementary	Subordinated
Intergenerational relationship: senior/junior	Egalitarian	Paternalistic
Intergenerational relationship: junior/senior	Respectful	Contemptuous
Inheritance pattern	Male line	Female line
Title to assets	Individual	Group
Occupational structure	Uniform	Diversified
Technological know-how	Rudimentary	Sophisticated
Economic differentiation	Extensive	Non-existent

(This list adds and subtracts variables from Epstein's list of eleven provided in Chapter 2.). She and colleagues in several Asian countries have been testing new approaches to the gathering of such data.

Epstein later provided an outline of compiling a "cost- and time-effective cultural profile of a target group":

1. Compile a list of key cultural variables, such as one list above;
2. Decide on a scale for the range linking the two extremes of options;
3. Use a variety of methods and techniques to establish where on each scale a society or subgroup falls:

a. Methods: Secondary data collection, perusal of relevant secondary data such as social surveys and anthropological studies, observation, preliminary inquiries from local officials, focus group discussions, and individual depth interviews.

b. Techniques: Open-ended questions, projective techniques which have been well-established in qualitative market research such as role play, "person from outer space," ranking, preparation of film script or radio broadcast, etc.

The fundamental idea is to employ **techniques analogous to market research**. One uses focus groups, structured interviews, and questionnaires. The researcher must avoid the tendency of inducing respondents to say what the researcher wants to hear. In this vein, sentence-completion tests and methods using association of ideas can be useful.

There is also room for participant observation in Epstein's repertoire of data gathering techniques. Time did not permit an elaboration of how one decides which data collection methods to use for what "variables" under what conditions. The scales were not illustrated. In a later communication, Epstein provided several examples of **predictions** based on key cultural variables:

> In a society with a matrilineal kinship system and patrivirilocal residence where shifting cultivation has been the dominant economic activity the introduction of lasting assets is likely to create social conflict.

If a society is found to have a strictly patrilineal kinship system and an authoritarian power structure, gender relations are likely to involve the subordination of women. To introduce an income generation project for women in such a male dominated society can be expected to be much more difficult and require different strategies than if the same project is to be introduced in a more liberal society with fairly egalitarian gender relations.

In an extremely hierarchically organized society with ascribed status allocation and an authoritarian political organization, innovations are unlikely to be accepted unless introduced through the senior generation (e.g., paradoxically grandmothers provide the key to fertility changes; similarly grandfathers are the initiators of new productive techniques). By contrast in societies with status achievement and a fairly democratic political organization and egalitarian intergenerational relations, younger men and women are likely to be innovators and entrepreneurs.

Epstein pointed out that "more work needs to be done to work out the predictive capacities of the various KCVs." There is **little evidence concerning the reliability and validity** of the data gathered through these various methods. But her big messages should not be lost in the scientific uncertainties. Just as no business would launch a product without market research, so **social market research should be routinely used** by policy makers, managers, and project designers. The techniques developed by market researchers in business should be adapted for use in sociocultural assessments.

John Ogbu asked **which sociocultural variables** turned out to be **most important**. And how does one do "participant observation" in a short time? Robert Putnam also asked for more information about how data are collected.

Epstein gave some examples. You go see the local headman. You select a sample and form a focus group. You examine aspects like debt: this helps you find out who are the "big men" and who are the clients, and to assess whether the debt is connected with other "services."

Mamadou Dia posed a central question: **So what** if we know these variables? This reminded us of a central issue in applied sociocultural research. It does little good practically to know all about soil types, unless we have some systematic knowledge (models, theory, rules of thumb) about soil-by-crop interactions and about soil treatments.

Dia also pushed Epstein on the matter of **limited time**. We had been asked, in effect, "Suppose you have three weeks to do local sociocultural research, what variables would you look at and how?" Dia said that he and his colleagues at the World Bank are focusing on **indigenous institutions**, which are reflections of the underlying cultural variables. They don't look directly at the cultural variables themselves.

Epstein pointed out that most projects are "expert rooted," in the sense that they are designed by outsiders. Often this means that little attempt is made to find out about the affected population--not even whether they think the proposed project is important.

Michael Cernea asked what is new in these techniques. Epstein cited certain psychological methods used in market research. In the business world investigators often pose the question to themselves, what would someone from outer space need to know here to set up a business? This leads to a list of variables to be explored. In Epstein's

experience, such variables are often neglected in project planning, with lamentable and predictable results.

Allen Hoben thought that a good deal of theoretical knowledge is needed to appreciate Epstein's data. "What you're saying is that this would be useful if you know a lot about social anthropology. But how useful would it be to someone who doesn't have that wisdom?"

Melvin Ember

Ember began with an example. Recently an international aid agency was trying to understand why, in certain regions of Africa, a new program in cassava growing was taking off, while in other regions it seemed unsuccessful. The agency asked Ember's Human Relations Area Files for help in correlating data about the sociocultural setting with program success. Unfortunately, up-to-date information was not available concerning some of the regions. The solution was to call up anthropologists who had recently undertaken field work in the regions and ask them to supply the information. The result: certain sociocultural variables predicted which regions were successful in growing cassava and which weren't.

Ember offered another example from his own research on commercialization in Samoa. Through the creative use of proxy variables to capture an important if partial aspect of local cultures, valuable if imperfect predictions could be made about local commercial activities.

There are **many ways to measure** things if you have a question, Ember summarized. It takes ingenuity, and it takes a scientific approach.

Ember discussed various **indices of cultural complexity**. These indices turn out to correlate with a surprising range of behavior, including type of economic activity, degree of hierarchy, and amount of specialization.

A considerable amount of new work is studying the sociocultural preconditions of democracy and conflict. Regarding **democracy**, many people assume that the simplest societies are all democratic, but this is in error. Political scientists have developed measures of "the ease of removing leaders," and these correlate with sociocultural variables. Regarding **conflict**, measures of "local fission"--that is, how readily groups split when problems occur--is the best predictor of less war.

Among nonindustrial societies, disaster-prone societies are also war-prone. People go to war to protect themselves, to take resources even though they don't have scarcity now. In a different domain, another predictor is "socialization of mistrust," measured for example by the extent to which parents encourage or discourage visits to houses of others and the extent of belief in sorcery. Several other variables, including the degree of inequality in access to resources and the "nature of local decision making," seem important as well.

Little evidence has been developed yet for linkages among sociocultural variables at the local level and **economic development**, but Ember believes the potential is there for such correlations, as in the cassava example.

Friday afternoon: "Attitudes and Structures"

Karl Dake

Dake summarized some of the empirical work validating the **grid-group** cultural theory developed by Mary Douglas. Cultures or ways of life fall into one of four cells, defined in this matrix:

Table 2
Four Archetypal Cultures or Ways of Life

	Strong Grid	Weak Grid
Strong Group	Hierarchical culture	Egalitarian culture
Weak Group	Fatalistic culture	Individualistic culture

Each society (or tribe or cultural group) comprises a mixture of these ways of life, which indeed are in some respects complementary.

This framework proves **useful in many levels** of analysis. For example, it helps predict social relations in a population, among persons and among institutions, in terms of such things as "distance," equality, rotation of power, and so forth. It also predicts what Dake called "social cognition," the way that risks for example are perceived and evaluated. The framework also helps predict "social biases" or patterns of belief, as well as everyday behavior at a number of levels. Dake gave an example involving his recent field studies in the United Kingdom.

What are the dimensions of culture? Dake and his colleagues make the point that a rather simple classification scheme gets one a surprising lot in terms of prediction. And he argued that this scheme is **consistent with other results**. For example, Geert Hofstede's work reveals international differences in such dimensions of behavior and ideas as power distance, masculinity-femininity, and individualism. Dake calculates that Hofstede's individualism index across countries correlates 0.8 with GNP. And this index was based on three survey questions.

The "cultural theory" of Dake and his colleagues goes beyond the binary distinction between individualistic and hierarchical, which has dominated the social sciences since their beginnings. An individual's propensities can be assessed with **a rather simple questionnaire**. In a paper submitted later, Dake and Michael Thompson show significant and important correlations among the answers to simple questions about attitudes and a (blind) characterization by an anthropologist of aspects of resource use and lifestyle in a sample of British households.

At the workshop Dake did not present or discuss these simple questions, nor did they appear in his and Thompson's paper. But they do appear in earlier work:

Table 3

Cultural Biases Questionnaire (British Edition, Short Version)

Hierarchy scale

I think there should be more discipline in the youth of today.
I would suspect the introduction of compulsory National Service.
People should be rewarded according to their position in society.
I am more strict than most people about what is right and wrong.
We should have stronger armed forces than we do now.

Individualism scale

In a fair system people with more ability should earn more.
A free society can only exist by giving companies the opportunity to prosper.
People who are willing to work hard should be allowed to get on.
In this country, the brightest should make it to the top.
If a person has the get-up-and-go to acquire wealth, that person should have the right to enjoy it.

Egalitarianism scale

If people in this country were treated more equally we would have fewer problems.
The government should make sure everyone has a good standard of living.
Those who get ahead should be taxed more to support the less fortunate.
I would support a tax change that made people with large incomes pay more.
I support government efforts to get rid of poverty.

Fatalism scale

There is no use for doing things for people--you only get it in the neck in the long run.
Cooperating with others rarely works.
The future is too uncertain for a person to make serious plans.
I have often been treated unfairly.
A person is better off if he or she doesn't trust anyone.

Source: Karl Dake. *The Varieties of Residential Experience* (in preparation). selections from the Cultural Biases Questionnaire based on factor loadings (table dated April 17, 1992).

Later, Dake's colleague Michael Thompson, who did not attend the workshop, kindly submitted excerpts from his field research on the four cultural types. He finds, for example, that on these dimensions "there is as much difference between Himalayan villages as there is between any one of them and the nation-state (and that too is highly varied). The notion of the traditional village, therefore, obscures more than it reveals." This work, however, does not summarize the reliability and validity of specific measures of the four cultural types.

In the workshop, questions came from several quarters. John Ogbu asked whether class and ethnic variables had been examined in this context. Scarlett Epstein wondered about age differences. Time did not permit an adequate discussion.

Mamadou Dia

Because Joseph Kalt was caught up in the freak storm that swept the Eastern seaboard, his colleague Stephen Cornell asked that their presentation be postponed in hopes Kalt would still arrive from Washington. (Alas, the storm would not permit it.) Mamadou Dia agreed to speak next, concerning a program of research he is directing at the World Bank.

Dia argued that certain **assumptions** underlie the African activities of the World Bank and other donors--assumptions that are **culturally and institutionally suspect**. At the broadest level one posits viable nation-states, to which loans are given, and appropriate public institutions, which can manage these loans if only given enough support. This has led to an approach that supplies technical assistance to "modernize" Africa through the transfer of outside know-how. The result is a "linear and mechanistic" conception of development, and it has proved inappropriate for much of Africa.

Another example of mistaken assumptions concerns **incentives**. In fact, anthropologists have shown that Africans tend to have different views of consumption, sharing, and accumulation from those assumed based on Western norms. Often Western-designed projects try to get around existing incentives, but this proves unsustainable and projects fail.

Since these and other assumptions about Africans are incorrect, it should be no surprise that development activities based on them tend not to work. Early on in their effort to reconceptualize the problem, Dia and his colleagues tried to come up with different cultural assumptions that more fairly reflected Africans' attitudes toward accumulation, consensus, and so forth. But as their work evolved, Dia and his colleagues have come to focus instead on the **traditional institutions**. Indigenous institutions are, or should be, the seedbed of development. Many of these institutions are located in the so-called informal sector. The research he is directing is looking at **successful indigenous organizations** and asking how they can be built upon.

The research falls in several categories. Under "culture and governance" are studies of traditional chiefs, of political transitions, and of the innovative *conferences nationales* that have characterized several recent reforms in West Africa. Under "participation" come studies of traditional age groups in several Sahelian countries and of quality circles in Burkina Faso. Under the rubric of "accumulation" is research on rotating savings and credit associations and other indigenous institutions.

How do we do this field work? Dia asked. We "get a good consultant." He mentioned several eminent figures. He noted that a variety of techniques are being employed, and **no single set of questions or variables** is being examined. One of the results of this research program may indeed be the suggestion that certain types of field work prove more useful than others.

Robert Putnam suggested that all the institutions mentioned are examples of "social capital." He agreed that if development tries to proceed without social capital, it can waste resources. But are all local institutions equally effective? Some are probably harmful, in fact. He cited the example of certain local institutions in Bologna versus Palermo. And so a question arises: how can we tell if an **indigenous institution is helpful or harmful?**

Allen Hoben noted that it is not unusual for a "successful" organization to become "unsuccessful." This raises the important issue of the **enabling environment** for successful local institutions.

John Ogbu pointed out that across Africa the density of local associations differs. A crucial question is: How can such associations be encouraged?

With regard to Dia's distinction between a research focus on African cultures and one instead on indigenous institutions, Robert Klitgaard argued that both should be studied. A crucial question concerns the **culture-by-institution interactions**. Indeed, more broadly we would like to know what policies and enabling environments make a difference, under what sociocultural conditions, to the strength, vitality, and success of what kinds of indigenous institutions? And then we must face the possibility that some sorts of institutions--indigenous or otherwise--will tend to be bad for development. Can we say which, under what conditions?

Stephen Cornell

Cornell's research with Joseph Kalt has investigated why some **Native American** tribes are succeeding economically and others are not. The many proposed explanations for these differences are often misleading and, in any case, have seldom been tested statistically. For example, the presence of prosperous adjacent non-Indian areas does not account for some tribes' success and others' failure. The Crows in Montana have coal, timber, wildlife, and water rights, but they are one of the poorest tribes, with a history of failures. In contrast, the White Mountain Apaches have abundant resources and succeed.

Cornell (a sociologist) and Kalt (an economist) began by studying twelve reservations They **"ask people to tell us stories."** Which people? Present and former heads of tribal governments, development officers, investors, and so forth. What stories? About "turning points" in tribal life, about successful and unsuccessful entrepreneurs, about resource use and investment.

Cornell and Kalt simultaneously gathered data about **institutions and attitudes**. In particular, they studied the separation of powers in tribal governance, the boundaries (social and geographical) perceived within the tribe and between the tribe and neighboring entities, and authority structures in the tribe and in smaller groupings within it. They also examined aspects of "collective identity" (for example, to which groups did people say they "belonged").

In the process, Cornell said, "we stumbled onto the significance of culture."

They now theorize that the **match between current and traditional institutions** helps explain success. Also important is the match between the types of projects undertaken and certain cultural norms (for example, the tolerance for hierarchy).

What variables prove most interesting? Cornell cited several:

Organizational boundaries: where does a person's allegiance lie?
Mechanisms for dispute resolution (current and traditional)
Tolerance of outsiders
Tolerance of hierarchy (i.e., "willingness to obey orders")
Attitudes toward resources
The "legitimate locus of authority," including the separation of powers

What techniques of data gathering have proved useful? Cornell noted that survey research is problematic, especially in certain tribes. Instead, he and Kalt have relied on key informants telling stories about the various dimensions. Typically, the field work has involved 1½ weeks on the reservation "listening to stories" and 1½ weeks in the anthropological library, ascertaining as much as possible about the traditional institutions and attitudes. **Three weeks per tribe**; and the time-consuming part, Cornell said, is getting access to key people.

For successful development, an institution has to be efficacious, and it also has to **fit with cultural preferences** and normative orders.

In their current research, Cornell and Kalt are trying to understand why some tribes seem to be better innovators than others. When tribal government gets embedded in kinship, there seems to be little innovation: one has to change too much in order to innovate.

Two Cornell/Kalt papers were submitted for the workshop, one before and one after. In addition, Cornell kindly provided an update of their latest work on the match between cultural contexts and modern institutions.

> We look more closely at the correspondence between current institutions and traditional ones (which presumably reflect the indigenous normative or cultural order) for two tribes: the Oglala Sioux and the White Mountain Apaches. In the process we look specifically at four dimensions of authority:
>
> - structure (what are the organizational units of authority?);
> - scope (what sorts of activities come under the authority of what units?);
> - location (where in the social system is the ultimate or primary authority located--e.g., in the local kinship unit? in the tribe as a whole? etc.);
> - source (on what sorts of qualities/behaviors is the legitimacy of authority based? heredity? efficacy? generosity? etc.)
>
> The "stories" we looked for in preparing this paper, whether told by ethnographic texts or by contemporary informants, were intended to get at these dimensions. What's interesting is that the Oglala Sioux turn out to be badly out of synch with their traditions; the Apaches more or less in synch. And guess who's doing very much better?

Mancur Olson commented that small organizations are typically more effective than large, especially in "primitive" settings. Africa might, he hypothesized, prove to be like the reservations Cornell and Kalt had studied.

Some of Cornell's early research focused on the acquisition and assertion of various identities among Native Americans, depending on the situation and the pay-offs from different presentations of the self. Robert Putnam noted that in Italy movers from one region to another tended to change their "cultures" quickly.

John Ogbu commented that Native Americans vis-à-vis the U.S. government may be quite different from Africans in relation to their governments.

Mamadou Dia observed that "an African goes to the city and takes the village with him." But the discussion of the plasticity of (certain?) cultural manifestations, and their manipulability, could not properly be pursued in the time allowed.

Saturday morning: "Are We Talking about the Same Thing(s)?"

Mancur Olson

Olson presented a kind of summary some of his work on the **origins of social institutions**. Violence is a primordial problem, because at times it is individually rational but socially harmful. In the midst of violence, establishing a peaceful order is a public good. Unless a group is small, the group will not provide this good. In order that an individual or coalition will "supply" a peaceful order, it must have a sufficiently long-term time horizon and the ability to capture privately enough of the benefits accruing to a peaceful order to make its provision profitable.

In Africa the time horizon has historically been short, and may still be today in many circumstances, and the groups below the level of nation-states are many and strong. Compared with most other parts of the world, Africa has a surplus of unused land. The types of economic activity that are prevalent and the ability to escape easily from oppression also help shape the type and amount of social order provided.

This fascinating discussion went on for some time. Its relevance for our discussion of how to measure cultures, and whether we were all speaking of the same things when we talked about "sociocultural variables," apparently resides in the worry that social scientists too often use "culture" to explain different social phenomena, instead of understanding (for example) the diseconomies of scale that attend the provision of collective goods. In blunter terms (not Olson's): **often we needn't invoke "sociocultural variables"** at all. Instead, we would be wiser to study the economic and game-theoretic aspects of local situations.

Allen Hoben offered a definition of culture for our consideration: "shared symbolic systems." Robert Putnam said Olson's stylized history was interesting but contained a questionable logical leap. Some communities organize monarchically, others do not. Democratic groups can emerge but there is no necessity that they do. Olson wondered whether this difference couldn't be explained in terms of the ease of fleeing despotic control. Putnam responded that whatever the origin of a particular way of solving the problem of establishing order, if a culture gets started on one or another track, there is an autonomous or inertial quality to the forms of civic society chosen. The **mixes of horizontal and vertical groupings persist**--or perhaps what Hofstede called "power distance." There are differences among indigenous and grafted institutions.

Mamadou Dia observed that it is not true that hierarchy is inconsistent with participation. Allen Hoben said Amhara culture implied that one could not cooperate without someone to dominate. One should look at indigenous "theories" about the social contract--in effect, **investigate local social theory**.

Stephen Cornell agreed that there was considerable variation in social organization among "primitive" societies. Is the source of power conceived of as taxation or generosity? How do processes of social change get "culturally ordered"? Cornell believes there are "cultural templates" for answering such questions. Karl Dake hypothesized that

these templates would be connected with the dimensions we have been discussing, that in fact **we are talking about the same thing**, whether we use terms like "power distance," "grid-group," or horizontal and vertical associations.

Melvin Ember noted that some things change rapidly and others don't. Why were some cultures readily converted to Christianity and other not? A major predictor, according to research by Carol Ember, is depopulation due to induced diseases. Another factor: whether people believed before the arrival of Christians that the gods could help.

Returning to the issue of whether we are talking about the same things, Cornell hypothesized that we had overlapping lists of sociocultural variables. They could be best understood as working at different levels, some representing deeper variables and others more superficial.

Putnam asked how we might choose among such indicators. As a first approximation, peoples agree on the goals of material welfare. That's not where they disagree. So what sociocultural traits are powerfully related to development?

Dake agreed that we are talking about the same things. He suggested we conceptualize our agreement as overlapping variables in the sense of factor analysis.

Olson told a couple of anecdotes, about Malinowki and Gibbon. He urged us not to bypass the fundamental practical problems peoples have had to solve as communities--**problems of collective action** and the provision of public goods such as law and order. Even an oppressive order can be better than none.

Saturday morning: "Constructs: What Theoretical Research Is Needed for Practical Impact?

John Ogbu

Ogbu shared some of his research on minority groups in America and elsewhere, including a sheet of possible variables that might explain the differences among different groups in academic achievement. Cultural variables are only part of the story, but Ogbu's work shows that they are important.

He then turned to a broader set of issues. He observed that "development" depends on how the groups define what is going on; indeed, it depends on what "developmental activities" mean in local terms. He wanted us to return to the question, why are some spontaneous organizations effective and others not? For example, why were some African societies stateless while others had powerful states (Dahomey, the Buganda)? He thought these things might be connected to descent patterns (patrilineal, matrilineal, double bilateral). Ogbu's own research has demonstrated how **self-definition matters** to instrumental responses, in terms of relations to dominant groups and in symbolic interpretations of the same events and structures. Sub-groups within the same ethnic group may have different self-definitions, which result in quite different definitions of the same behavior.

Ogbu commented on the use of indigenous organizations for developmental activities. Among Ibos, local organizations exist in part because Ibos want to compete with other groups, even with other Ibo villages. The government has subsidized local social services but left decisions and the actual construction to the local groups, which have had to contribute half the costs.

A crucial sociocultural variable is **the folk theory of how you succeed**. Is it by luck or by hard work or by whom you know?

Ogbu said that even if we agree on the variables we are talking about, we need a framework in which to put the relevant traits together. What kinds of societies and cultures are there?

Dake once again believed that the different notions were complementary. "I can absorb Epstein, Olson, and Putnam in grid-group theory." Ogbu insisted that local constructions of what a group means will vary for indigenous institutions across cultures. Ember argued that in order to begin doing such comparisons one would need to have a list of relevant variables.

Hoben raised a somewhat different point: **what social units** should we be looking at? Households are problematic, he said. Lineage groups are not as useful as was once thought. Dia suggested that the appropriate group depends on the problem one is examining. It depends on the target group and the purpose of the inquiry. For example, one might want to understand the sociocultural setting of contact groups in agriculture. The question is how to operationalize such investigations.

Cornell asked himself a question and then answered it. What sociocultural variables would he want to know in the case of Native American tribes? He divided the variables into two categories, **conceptual and structural** (some might say cognitive and institutional).

Cornell's conceptual category included these questions:

1. the concept of collective identity (boundary of the relevant group; boundary of authority; does the enforced boundary match the indigenous boundary?)
2. the concept of appropriate power relations (hierarchy, kinship, can one person tell others what to do?)
3. the concepts of acquisition and generosity (for the self or the group, and other aspects).

His structural variables included these:

1. what aspects of life are organized by kinship and what things are differentiated (and how)?
2. what are the legal rights, constraints, and opportunities (for example, in years past the OEO versus the Bureau of Indian Affairs)?

Ember spoke about how to find out such information. He recommended asking a person who makes decisions over a range of issues--one can thereby invoke answers pertaining to all of Cornell's structural variables.

Hoben alluded to "rapid rural appraisal" techniques, a variety of methods for obtaining quick data on a range of variables. These techniques ranged from "quick transects" to focus groups to various scaling methods to getting people to draw a map of the area.

Clifford Chanin

Since Chanin had to leave at noon, he was asked to share his thoughts about implications for research and action. Chanin began by alluding to a growing interest in civil society. The concept had clear **roots in the West**. Was it possible that we were applying a concept from "us" that implies things about "them" that aren't valid?

Chanin agreed that the study of the limits of effectiveness of spontaneous institutions was important. Maybe economics gets one 70 percent of the way toward understanding such institutions, but we are all interested in how to go beyond the economics. In this vein Chanin noted that we had not broached **religion or ideology** and how they lead to a deeper understanding of productivity, growth, and social harmony.

He asked what the ramifications might be of a better understanding, and expressed some worries. Some societies are doing better than others--describing these differences may simply describe. Labels like "successful" may be misused. Talking about differences also raises the issue of social and cultural change, also questions we have barely addressed.

Chanin congratulated the workshop participants on their discipline and insight. He hoped this work would indeed lead to a renaissance in applied cultural studies.

Mamadou Dia commented on how such information might have a practical payoff. One could use success stories from similar cultures, such as neighboring countries, to stimulate people to rethink what they were doing and perhaps to make better choices.

Dia distinguished **macro, meso, and micro** levels of reform, action, and analysis. Macro changes involve such things as the allocative functions of the central government. Here one needs to factor in the sociocultural dimensions in order to build institutions, create consensus, and perhaps modify social structures. The meso level refers to institutional change and group behavior and interactions, while the micro level means the units that produce goods and services, where the issues are how to utilize skills and individual traits.

Scarlett Epstein agreed with Chanin that Western cultures can bring their own biases to development work. She noted, for example, that Western non-government organizations have their own "cultures." As NGOs are given more tasks and shorter time horizons, their own cultures and standard operating procedures may have to change.

Saturday afternoon: "Empirical Research on Sociocultural Contexts: What Steps Are Needed?"

Robert Klitgaard

Klitgaard encouraged participants to address the measurement question once again. He reviewed several of the dimensions and methods of data collection already raised in the workshop. Since Michael Cernea was unfortunately ill, he could not present his fascinating ideas. (A summary of a paper he submitted later appears in chapter 6 below.) Cernea has found one question particularly effective in understanding the local scene: He asks the locals to imagine that a house has burned down by accident. What happens? Cernea points out that the answers give hints about who is important and who is not, risk sharing, productive arrangements, kinship, the role of formal institutions, beliefs about witchcraft and neighboring tribes, and so forth. Stephen Cornell has posed several "key questions"? Are there others?

In the discussion that followed, a number of ideas emerged. Someone [my notes on this session are inadequate, since I had to moderate--RK] suggested the importance of rapidly assessing an indigenous institution in terms of its moral basis and its single- or multi-purpose nature. Someone else mentioned the importance of appraising local

institutions affecting inheritance, gender roles, and what might be called the ethos of social organization (for example, competition and conformity).

Karl Dake cited Alan Fisk's research in West Africa (*Structures of Social Life*), which talked about four ways to solve problems: authority, consensus, competition, and fatalism. These correspond to the four "cultures" in Douglas's theory.

Melvin Ember said that a considerable amount of data already exist. For example, in the Human Relations Area Files, there are now 90 African studies that could be tapped. Dake asked whether these studies included a concept akin to "power distance." Ember replied that one would have to call up the ethnographers in each subregion and ask for the information. Somehow, he believes, the data on the 90 cultures could be matched with concepts from Dake, Cornell, and Epstein.

Scarlett Epstein argued that a major step in a renaissance of applied sociocultural studies would be the carrying forth of **new ethnographic research** in carefully chosen areas using a **standard set of core variables**. The new information could be compared with, perhaps combined with, the older studies represented in the HRAF.

Saturday afternoon: "Using Sociocultural Information in Practical Work"

Allen Hoben

Hoben made a number of ethnographic points about the cultures of decision making in international development. Many aspects of the culture of an organization like USAID or the World Bank mitigated against the use of information about local peoples.

Regarding the idea of small grants to indigenous institutions, Hoben's experience has led him to a sad conclusion: project funding often tends to destroy local organizations. If one wants to foster local associations, a better strategy than funding them is to improve the **enabling environment** for them--such things as infrastructure, health, and various public policies. The issues may be particularly salient in areas involving basic human needs and resettlement.

Hoben did not want to seem pessimistic, because he was excited by the ideas presented at the workshop. But he did sound a warning note: "Almost all the bad ideas in development have had academic origins."

Klitgaard argued that the best way to make information useful in practice was to work with those making decisions, including local groups, with a combination of case studies of success and "frameworks for analysis." Dia agreed, and he observed that the **success stories** had to be local--i.e., in Africa, African successes.

Epstein's advice for practical work drew on a business analogy. No business person would go forward without a market test. Yet "development types" don't tend to think of their "targets" as **clients or customers**. This shift was needed.

Hoben observed that local people often copy the wrong things about success stories. They themselves often leave out the cultural fit.

Alberta Arthurs, who had joined the workshop for the final afternoon, wondered how **the humanities** might be inserted in these decision processes. For many reasons people are rethinking what development means. Cultural conflict is on people's minds. The environmental movement is challenging some of the older ways of thinking about economic success.

Returning to involving indigenous organizations in a study, Hoben recommended limiting the sample to a narrower, more homogeneous set of such organizations--for example, organizations with similar functions. Otherwise the research might compare cats and dogs.

To close the workshop, Klitgaard asked each person what implications he or she would draw for action. (Unfortunately, the storm had forced several members to leave early to make sure they could leave New York that day.)

Melvin Ember began. He pointed out that **"old ethnography"** could be used as a **predictor** for things today. It would be feasible to find the information about most variables of interest, and it would be relatively cheap and quick.

Scarlett Epstein underscored the relative lack of support by academic anthropologists for the needed practical work. Consequently, one had to think in terms of regenerating the field of sociocultural studies, and this would require a strategy of attack, so to speak. She liked the idea of **restudying societies** for which data are already available, using standardized core data and indigenous researchers. A useful sample size might be twelve societies.

Mamadou Dia recommended that we study successful indigenous institutions, which mediate between the tasks of "modernity" and the concepts and structures of "traditional cultures." One should **discuss cultural variables on the basis of successful local institutions**.

Allen Hoben recommended that research on "spontaneous institutions" look at organizations with similar functions and that the results be tied to the World Bank studies described by Dia and mentioned in Cernea's writings. He thought it would be important to have a careful, wide-ranging **review of the results** of Dia's research. He also recommended investigating Dia's hypothesis at the outset that people assume Africans are the same as Westerners: might people in places like the Bank and USAID already "take culture into account" with strong assumptions and stereotypes about African behavior?

Alberta Arthurs pointed out that many donors now think they *do* take culture into account by employing anthropologists and sociologists, carrying out social soundness analyses, and so forth. She thinks **the cast of characters is incomplete**. We should bring in historians, philosophers, literary theorists, have them enter into the process of development. A problem, she admitted, was that humanists often don't want to get involved, "so it's partly their fault."

Paul Festa described some of his lessons from studying China. The Bank was having little leverage in China because it was still in a learning mode about that society and culture. It would be important there and elsewhere to "take the results to the **intended beneficiaries**."

Damien Pwono stressed the importance of mechanisms for the promotion and **dissemination** of success stories. It wasn't enough simply to write studies. One had to consider training programs, ways to make the results real to government officials (among others), and novel techniques of dissemination such as short videos.

Stephen Cornell pointed out a robust finding from his and Kalt's research: the **success stories involved assertive tribes**. He thought the key question for action and research involved how to specify the sociocultural variables that mattered. As do many other

participants, he hopes that the high level of interaction of this workshop could be sustained.

Karl Dake alluded to the remarkable correlations among the findings of his questionnaire survey on the four cultural types and the results of ethnographic research in a subset of the families he surveyed. This suggests that **the study of relatively simple data can be reliable and interesting**.

Now we need to generate hypotheses concerning these variables and economic development. And we need to carry forth "cultural audits" in places like Africa, to refine the data gathering techniques and test the hypotheses. In this process, **more interaction among different research traditions** can bear fruit.

A Summary of Ways to Measure Sociocultural Conditions

The following is a recapitulation of some of the suggested dimensions or aspects of "culture" worth trying to measure, and how to do so.

What variables prove most interesting? Stephen Cornell cites several:

Organizational boundaries: where does a person's allegiance lie?
Mechanisms for dispute resolution (current and traditional)
Tolerance of outsiders
Tolerance of hierarchy (i.e., "willingness to obey orders")
Attitudes toward resources
The "legitimate locus of authority," including the separation of powers

e and Joseph Kalt have relied on key informants and library work. Typically, the field work has involved 1½ weeks on each reservation "listening to stories" and 1½ weeks in the anthropological library, ascertaining as much as possible about the traditional institutions and attitudes. They "asked people to tell us stories." Which people? Present and former heads of tribal governments, development officers, investors, and so forth. What stories? About "turning points" in tribal life, about successful and unsuccessful entrepreneurs, about resource use and investment.

Cornell distinguishes "conceptual variables" and "structural variables." The former include:

1. the concept of collective identity (boundary of the relevant group; boundary of authority; does the enforced boundary match the indigenous boundary?)
2. the concept of appropriate power relations (hierarchy, kinship, can one person tell others what to do?)
3. the concepts of acquisition and generosity (for the self or the group, and other aspects).

His structural variables include:

1. what aspects of life are organized by kinship and what things are differentiated (and how)?

2. what are the legal rights, constraints, and opportunities (for example, in years past the OEO versus the Bureau of Indian Affairs)?

In their current work Cornell and Kalt are examining four dimensions of authority:
- structure (what are the organizational units of authority?);
- scope (what sorts of activities come under the authority of what units?);
- location (where in the social system is the ultimate or primary authority located--e.g., in the local kinship unit? in the tribe as a whole? etc.);
- source (on what sorts of qualities/behaviors is the legitimacy of authority based? heredity? efficacy? generosity? etc.)

* * * * *

John Ogbu notes that a crucial sociocultural variable is the folk theory of how you succeed. Is it by luck or by hard work or by whom you know?

He also emphasizes the way minorities see themselves: (1) autonomous, immigrant or voluntary, and (2) castelike or involuntary.

> Voluntary minorities seem to bring to the United States a sense of who they are from their homeland and seem to retain this different but non-oppositional social identity at least during the first generation. Involuntary minorities, in contrast, develop a new sense of social or collective identity that is in opposition to the social identity of the dominant group after they have become subordinated. They do so in response to their treatment by White Americans in economic, political, social, psychological, cultural, and language domains. (p. 9 of his paper summarized in Chapter 6)

"Involuntary minorities interpret the cultural and language differences as markers of their collective identity to be maintained, not as barriers to be overcome." (10) "Moreover, they lack the positive dual frame of reference of the immigrants, who compare their progress in the United States with that of their peers 'back home.'" (11) These observations suggest ways of "measuring" or classifying self-identity.

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Michael Cernea has found one question particularly effective in understanding the local scene: He asks the locals to imagine that a house has burned down by accident. What then happens? Cernea points out that the answers give hints about who is important and who is not, risk sharing, productive arrangements, kinship, the role of formal institutions, beliefs about witchcraft and neighboring tribes, and so forth.

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Robert Putnam advocates "measures of horizontal community organizations," such as rotating savings and credit associations, horizontal as opposed to patron-client forms of political participation, and voluntary associations of every kind. Also, he finds predictive power in attitudinal questions, such as whether citizens agree with statements like "I usually obey the law, including traffic laws."

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T. Scarlett Epstein provides a list of "general key cultural variables" that should be assessed for each local community to be affected by a developmental activity:

Epstein's Revised List of Cultural Variables

Cultural Variable	Extremes of Possible Options	
Unit of decision making	Individual	Group
Patron-client relationship	Situational	Continuous
Allocation of status	Achieved	Ascribed
Prestige criteria	Behavior	Expenditure
Kinship structure	Patrilineal	Matrilineal
Family organization	Nuclear	Extended
Marriage arrangements	Monogamy	Polygamy
Residence pattern	Patrilocal	Uxorilocal
Gender relationship	Complementary	Subordinated
Intergenerational relationship: senior/junior	Egalitarian	Paternalistic
Intergenerational relationship: junior/senior	Respectful	Contemptuous
Inheritance pattern	Male line	Female line
Title to assets	Individual	Group
Occupational structure	Uniform	Diversified
Technological know-how	Rudimentary	Sophisticated
Economic differentiation	Extensive	Non-existent

Epstein suggests using a variety of methods and techniques to establish where on each scale a society or subgroup falls:

a. Methods: Secondary data collection; perusal of relevant secondary data such as social surveys and anthropological studies; observation; preliminary inquiries from local officials; focus group discussions; individual depth interviews.

b. Techniques: Open-ended questions; projective techniques which have been well-established in qualitative market research such as role play, "person from outer space," ranking, preparation of film script or radio broadcast, etc.

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Melvin Ember speaks of the many correlates of anthropological indices of "cultural complexity." The correlates include economic activities, degree of hierarchy, and amount of specialization. He also suggests looking at a variable that might be called the "socialization of mistrust," measured for example by the extent to which parents encourage or discourage visits to houses of others and the extent of belief in sorcery. Several other variables, including the degree of inequality in access to resources and the "nature of local decision making," seem important as well.

Ember reminds us that a considerable amount of sociocultural data already exist. For example, in the Human Relations Area Files, there are now 90 African societies for which information could be tapped. Ember believes that these data, supplemented by interviews with anthropologists who have recently studied the society, could be matched with concepts from Dake, Cornell, and Epstein.

* * * * *

Geert Hofstede's work reveals international differences in such dimensions of behavior and ideas as power distance, masculinity-femininity, and individualism. These are measured via standard questionnaires.

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Karl Dake and his colleagues posit four cultures or ways of life that exist, in different blends and balances, in every society and subgroup. Here is an easy questionnaire that has been validated using (independent) anthropological information in Great Britain:

Hierarchy scale

I think there should be more discipline in the youth of today.
I would suspect the introduction of compulsory National Service.
People should be rewarded according to their position in society.
I am more strict than most people about what is right and wrong.
We should have stronger armed forces than we do now.

Individualism scale

In a fair system people with more ability should earn more.
A free society can only exist by giving companies the opportunity to prosper.
People who are willing to work hard should be allowed to get on.
In this country, the brightest should make it to the top.
If a person has the get-up-and-go to acquire wealth, that person should have the right to enjoy it.

Egalitarianism scale

If people in this country were treated more equally we would have fewer problems.
The government should make sure everyone has a good standard of living.
Those who get ahead should be taxed more to support the less fortunate.
I would support a tax change that made people with large incomes pay more.
I support government efforts to get rid of poverty.

Fatalism scale

There is no use for doing things for people--you only get it in the neck in the long run.
Cooperating with others rarely works.
The future is too uncertain for a person to make serious plans.
I have often been treated unfairly.
A person is better off if he or she doesn't trust anyone.

* * * * *

Mamadou Dia recommends that we study successful indigenous institutions, which mediate between the tasks of "modernity" and the concepts and structures of "traditional cultures." One should discuss cultural variables on the basis of successful local institutions. Among the variables of interest in Africa are attitudes toward accumulation, leisure, consensus, and display.

4. CULTURE AND SELF-GOVERNMENT: AMERICAN INDIAN RESERVATIONS

CULTURAL NORMS, EFFECTIVE SELF-GOVERNMENT, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ON AMERICAN INDIAN RESERVATIONS

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We are engaged in an on-going research project concerning self-government on American Indian reservations. Tribes on reservations now have extensive sovereign powers, ranging from constitutional and legislative to judicial and regulatory. Our central objective is to explain effective collective action, particularly the selection and implementation of policies and institutions that promote economic development.

The research has its intellectual origins in two primary quandaries. First, with the advent of federal policies of self-determination for tribal governments on U.S. reservations, a handful of the country's 250+ tribes are emerging as places of sustained economic development. What separates these tribes from the others, and why did it take adoption of policies of self-determination before economic development could break out on any reservation? Second, we take it as a stylized fact that effective governmental policies and institutions are necessary (if not sufficient) conditions for a society to sustain economic growth; but such policies and institutions are public goods borne out of and resting upon a potentially Hobbesian pre-constitutional world. What informal systems of reciprocity (e.g., through repeat interaction and reputation formation) and/or informal contract (e.g., cultural norms) underlie the structure, authority and sustainability of formal institutions of collective action, and to what extent can such informal systems be predicted and explained?

I. THE ANALYTIC FRAMEWORK

To try to get a handle on these and subsidiary questions, we are working with a model of collective political action in which:

1. Individuals are rational in the usual economist's sense.

2. Individuals are social beings with meta-preferences for feelings of moral well-being (self righteousness, self-esteem, absence of guilt) and social belonging (status, acceptance, avoidance of loneliness) (per Frank, Passions Within Reason; Smith, Theory of Moral Sentiments; and some of the socio-biologists).

3. The specific tastes that these meta-preferences manifest are the product (in a Stigler-Becker, "*De Gustibus Non Est Disputandum*" sense) of a "sociology of learning" (North, Institutions, Institutional Change...) by which the individual acquires notions of right and wrong, proper and improper, etc., (e.g., as ideologies in the political arena).

4. A "sociology of learning" also structures the individual's perceived opportunity sets by imparting conceptions of individual and social feasibility and the technologies of individual and collective action (per Mary Douglas, How Institutions Think).

5. The shared tastes and perceptions of opportunity sets are termed "cultural norms". These are classic public goods tied to the selective incentives which are the private additions or subtractions to the utility attendant to the meta-preferences. To illustrate:

> By publicly opposing the tribal chairman's power grab (e.g., he wanted sole authority to appoint me to the position of manager of the Tribe's ski resort), I contribute to the maintenance of a piece of shared (i.e., a public good) cultural "capital" -- a cultural norm of the form "Legitimate political power should not be vested in a single individual; it should be shared by the district leaders." In return for my actions, I receive private payoffs in the form of utility-enhancing feelings of self-righteousness (i.e., a private good, like chocolate). I also receive private goods in the form of utility-enhancing feelings of acceptance because my aunt praises me for my actions.

6. The additions or subtractions to private utility are produced in a network of interlinked social relationships in which individuals are both consumers and producers. This network takes the form: Actor A's violation of cultural norm N1 is consumed by Actor B in the form of self-righteous hostility; Actor B, in turn, produces rejection (e.g., ostracization, guilty admonition, etc.) of Actor A, who consumes the rejection as a subtraction of private meta-preference utility; Actors C, D,... produce social acceptance of Actor B who consumes such acceptance as a private addition to meta-preference utility. From the example above, my aunt praises me for my "unselfish" (self-righteous) actions in order to receive the private payoffs of her own feelings of self-righteousness and acceptance. The latter she receives because her acquaintances reward her with... and so on.

II. RESEARCH STRATEGY

We are playing with this approach because it gives an answer to one version of "the paradox that ate public choice" (Shepsle): Governments (democratic ones, at least) are public goods, and there is ultimately no meta-government which compels their provision and maintenance. What does?

Our approach hypothesizes that the meta, pre-constitutional game is not Hobbesian. Rather, the network of cultural norms *is* the meta-government. This is somewhat familiar social contract, cultural capital stuff. Our twist is to explore the "rational choice within a network" framework (i.e., norms as public goods provided by tying them to the private goods of moral sentiments) and to test certain aspects of the framework.

The core problem/danger in what we are doing is the flavor of appealing to tastes as explanation of heterogeneity in individual and collective behavior. In our context this arises as a version of: "Well, the Crow Tribe has the government it has because the citizens have tastes for a particular set of cultural norms;" and worse, "The Crow aren't changing their government in the face of 86% unemployment because these norms are not subject to any invisible hand process because they operate on individuals as private consumption goods (the selective incentives of moral sentiments), and no such process weeds out consumption goods" (per Becker).

Recognizing these problems, we think we have some tests that avoid them in certain dimensions. Specifically, the American Indian context is one in which current governments were *de facto* imposed on tribes in the last 40-60 years, and tribes have been freed to exercise sovereign powers under these governments over the last 10-20 years.

With this setting, the primary hypothesis that we feel we have made some progress on concerns cultural/institutional "match." That is, if it is the network of cultural norms that underlies effective formal institutions of government, we ought to find that tribes for whom the federally-imposed governmental form (typically strong chief executive, one house legislature, no independent judiciary) matches the indigenous governmental form are performing better than tribes for whom there is not a match.

To turn to matters of measurement, testing the foregoing hypothesis has involved: 1) a Putnamesque presumption that pre-conquest cultural norms regarding political legitimacy, institutional design, etc., are still operative within reservation societies; 2) construction of a binary "match" variable through the historical and anthropological literature; and 3) application of Boolean, small-sample "regression" techniques (as pioneered

by Ragin) for actually applying our "match" test to a relatively small sample of tribes. Holding other neoclassical factors constant, we think we are finding that cultural/institutional match is a necessary, but not sufficient. condition for effective government and economic development.

III. EXTENSIONS

The foregoing results may indicate that "culture matters" in the social contract sense, but shed no light on such matters as the origin or evolution of cultural norms. In particular, we would like to have a theory (perhaps instrumental at the individual level and invisible hand at the collective level) of where, when and how cultural norms change. To move in this direction, we are examining the following kinds of matters:

1. Private/Public Norms: Cultural norms seem to operate in many dimensions of behavior, from risk (Tversky) to clothing (Douglas). Norms, however, arguably differ in the extent to which they are private or public in their effects. A norm regarding the proper number of children to have seems to have much more privateness than a norm regarding the independence of the judiciary. We ought to predict that a norm of the former type is much more instrumental and subject to invisible hand and relative price effects. Can we test this?

2. Charismatic Leadership: The vast majority of tribes that have taken off economically are marked by the emergence of a charismatic, often authoritarian leader over the last 20 years. These leaders appear to substitute the private consumption good of "charisma" (like chocolate, we all know it when we taste it) for past cultural norms as they quickly redefine a new set of norms (a "good" Apache now dons a chartreuse ski outfit and works as tourism provider). Can we test this?

Table 1

Economic Conditions
On Selected American Indian Reservations

	Change in Income 1977-1989	Adults with 1989 Income > $7000	1989 BLS Unemployment	1989 Total Unemployment
Flathead	16%	39%	20%	41%
White Mountain Apache	12%	33%	11%	21%
Cochiti Pueblo	10%	43%	10%	22%
Mescalero Apache	9%	18%	52%	58%
Mississippi Choctaw	9%	36%	26%	27%
Muckleshoot	6%	16%	50%	57%
Pine Ridge Sioux	-1%	21%	61%	73%
Passamaquoddy	-3%	19%	56%	66%
San Carlos Apache	-7%	16%	51%	62%
Rosebud Sioux	-10%	4%	90%	93%
Lummi	-11%	19%	46%	58%
Hualapai	-11%	11%	45%	74%
Yakima	-12%	20%	61%	63%
Crow	-12%	11%	67%	78%
Northern Cheyenne	-15%	29%	48%	55%
All Reservation Indians	-1%	24%	40%	48%

Note: "Change in Income" refers to the change in the percentage of adults with incomes in excess of BIA poverty levels ($5000 in 1977 and $7000 in 1989). "BLS Unemployment" measures adults looking for employment but not finding it. "Total Unemployment" measures the percent of the tribal workforce not working.

Source: U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, "Indian Service Population and Labor Force Estimates," January 1989.

Table 4

BOOLEAN ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ON AMERICAN INDIAN RESERVATIONS

	CAUSAL FACTORS									DEVELOPING
RESERVATION	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	?
COCHITI PUEBLO	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	Y
CROW	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	N
FLATHEAD	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	Y
HUALAPAI	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	N
MESCALERO APACHE	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	Y
MUCKLESHOOT	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	?
NORTHERN CHEYENNE	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	N
PINE RIDGE SIOUX	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	N
ROSEBUD SIOUX	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	N
SAN CARLOS APACHE	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	N
WHITE MTN APACHE	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	Y
YAKIMA	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	N

SPECIFICATION OF CAUSAL FACTORS

FACTOR A: The reservation's natural resource endowment.

FACTOR B: Employment and investment opportunities in the adjacent non-Indian economy.

FACTOR C: Human capital accumulation, as reflected in educational attainment.

FACTOR D: Absence of governmental and cultural barriers to inter-"national" trade in capital, labor, technology and goods.

FACTOR E: Constitutional form provides for strong chief executive.

FACTOR F: Constitutional form provides for strong representative legislature/weak chief executive.

FACTOR G: Constitutional form provides for strong general council legislature/weak chief executive.

FACTOR H: Indigenous political organization matches constitutional form.

FACTOR I: Independent judicial function being performed.

BOOLEAN STATEMENT OF PRIME IMPLICANTS: NECESSARY AND SUFFICIENT CAUSES OF DEVELOPMENT

(Upper Case = Present; Lower Case = Absent)

$$Y = HDg \cdot [Ei \cdot (AB + BC + AC) + FI \cdot (ABC)]$$

SEARCHING FOR STORIES: FIELDWORK STRATEGIES ON AMERICAN INDIAN RESERVATIONS

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This paper is a companion to the paper prepared by the authors for the Sociocultural Variables Workshop and titled "Cultural Norms, Effective Self-Government, and Economic Development on American Indian Reservations." That first paper presents our analytical framework and overall research strategy. This second paper discusses how we are attempting to implement this research program in the field.

A BRIEF REPRISE

The immediate objective of our research is to explain effective collective action on the part of American Indian tribes, and in particular to explain differentially apparent success in building institutions and selecting policies that promote reservation economic development. Our strategy has roots in the common perception that democratic governments are public goods, and that ultimately there is no meta-government that compels their provision and maintenance. Our hypothesis is that the network of cultural norms in fact *is* the meta-government. We further explore the "rational choice within a network" idea, seeing norms as public goods provided by tying them to the private goods of moral sentiments. We are able to test certain aspects of this conception thanks to the peculiar histories of American Indian tribes: in most cases, the governments of those tribes were not chosen by the tribes themselves, but were imposed upon them in one way or another over the last 40-60 years; furthermore, within the last two decades those tribes have been freed, to a significant degree, to exercise sovereign powers under these governments.

Twelve American Indian tribes constitute our field sample. Our research to date has found strong support for, among other things, the central importance of the match between cultural norms and formal institutions in facilitating collecuve action and sustaining economic development. *Ceteris paribus*, tribes for whom the federally-imposed governmental form matches the indigenous governmental form — which we assume reflected prevailing cultural norms — are performing better, on the whole, that tribes lacking such a match.

THE METHODOLOGICAL PROBLEM

The methodological task that emerges from this framework would appear to be simple: establish the indigenous governmental structures of various tribes and compare them to the imposed ones. As usual, things are more complex than they appear at the start.

First, establishing the indigenous structure is not always easy, given the variable quality and quantity of data on Indian nations early in the history of Indian-white interaction. Second, the point is to establish not simply the structure of government in each time period, but the normative order that underlies that structure and is the source of its legitimacy, and to discover how that order has changed from one time period to the next. This is typically even more difficult to establish than the structural details, if for different reasons in each time period. While definitive material on normative order in the past is often unsystematic, in many cases it can be discovered from a careful reading of the

available texts. Furthermore, the assumption that institutional order reflects underlying cultural norms is more realistic for the pre-conquest period, when tribes were free to organize themselves literally as they saw fit, allowing us to interpret normative order from institutional structure.

The present is trickier, especially in a project that lacks the time or resources to carry out extended ethnographies of multiple cases. Imposed institutions may have little to do with currently operative norms, and are therefore of little help in identifying them. While we hypothesize that pre-conquest cultural norms regarding political legitimacy, institutional design, and related issues are still operative within reservation societies, this is not always the case, nor are they necessarily operative in unchanged form. Conquest, confinement on reservations, and years of tutelary federal administration were differentially destructive of indigenous cultures. In some cases, the normative order that underlay indigenous governing structures may be substantially intact; in others, it may exist only partially or not at all thanks to federal interventions or indigenous responses to changing conditions; in still others, charismatic leaders may have successfully redefined past norms. In any case, in order to gain adequate purchase on the institutional/cultural match issue, we have to investigate the contemporary normative order and the degree to which it departs from the past.

This places a high premium on our ability to study contemporary sociocultural variables on Indian reservations without relying on extended ethnographic research. One option would be attitudinal surveys, but we are skeptical of their efficacy. While we have not tried it, survey research has had mixed success on Indian reservations, and we are doubtful that it can meet our needs effectively.

THE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

What we need most is information about the cultural order itself: What models of appropriate individual and collective behavior and organization do people use as they negotiate the world around them, evaluate their own options and the behaviors of other persons, make decisions, and organize for action? The approach described here has emerged gradually in our work, changing as both data and early analysis reshaped the questions we were asking and the analytical framework behind them.

The overall strategy involves (1) establishing to the best of our ability aboriginal institutional and normative baselines for each tribe in our sample, and (2) comparing the institutional and normative themes that emerge in these baselines with contemporary normative order and patterns of institutional organization and collective action. As far as sociocultural variables are concerned, we focus on two things: shared conceptions (of appropriate behavior, of appropriate power relations, of the relationships between self and collectivity and between collectivity and outsiders, and so on) and internal social structures (social and political organization). (We also pay close attention to the external environment of constraints and opportunities within which tribes have to operate — and which clearly impinges on intragroup sociocultural variables — but that is different from the immediate task of examining the variables themselves.)

ARCHIVAL WORK

The first step — establishing aboriginal baselines — is methodologically the more straightforward, although data variability complicates comparison and leaves some questions unanswered. We concentrate on the following phenomena:

- Institutions of governance (the organizational structure itself)

- Scope of governmental authority (who has how much authority over which activities and persons)
- Structural differentiation (extent to which economy and/or polity are organizationally embedded in kinship relations, which influences the degree of institutional flexibility in the face of changing conditions)
- Property rights (especially collective vs. individual ownership/control of resources)
- Focus of collective identity (relative importance of tribal and subtribal identities as bases of collective action)
- Bases of leadership (charisma, performance, inheritance, etc.)
- Bases of individual social status
- Degree of insularity (how elaborate are trade and other relationships with outsiders).

Research at this stage relies largely on anthropological and historical materials: tribal ethnographies, histories of early Indian-white relations, compendia such as the Smithsonian Institution's *Encyclopedia of North American Indians* and the Human Relations Area Files, and such other evidence as we can find.

The second step — establishing contemporary normative order and institutional structure — relies to some degree on tribal and federal government documents (e.g., tribal constitutions, by-laws of tribal enterprises, federal reports, and secondary scholarship), but the primary research vehicle is fieldwork.

SEARCHING FOR STORIES: FIELDWORK

The following summarizes what we attempt to do in the field. As with fieldwork generally, implementation is highly contingent. It depends on a number of factors, among them our success in establishing trust in the community, our access to appropriate persons, our ability to persuade people to talk about the things we wish to talk about, and so on. In practice, we have had mixed success: we have been able to implement this strategy more fully in some situations than in others. Overall, however, we have found it the most effective means of gaining leverage on the issue of institutional/normative match.

The phenomena at issue are much the same as those listed above under Archival Research, but the method is very different. The bulk of our fieldwork relies on stories. While we frequently request specific information from our informants about, for example, how a particular part of the tribal government works, or what the relationship is between a certain tribal enterprise and the tribal government, we have found that our most useful field data come from the stories told by informants in response to our questions. This is especially true regarding normative issues or other intangibles. As a consequence, instead of asking directly about such issues, we typically solicit stories about events, organizations, activities, or relationships. The stories we look and listen for have to do with such things as:

- Turning points in the political life of the tribe, particulary involving assertions of tribal control over resources, programs, policymaking: what happened, who was involved, and why?
- How specific internal disputes were dealt with.
- How specific resource-use decisions were made.
- What leaders do and what leaders should have done in specific situations.
- What kinds of public and private goods appear to be valued?
- Indigenous organizational activity: how does it occur, along what group boundaries, with what resources, obtained from whom?

- Specific tribal or private enterprises: how were they started, how do they work, what happened when they failed (if they did)?
- How subtribal communities respond to specific actions of the tribal government.
- Relations with the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA): what practical role does it play in reservation affairs?

Stories about such topics typically include plenty of hard facts, but they are more useful for the windows they open on both conceptual and structural issues. Stories often reveal more than direct questions do about such issues as: Whatever the formal structure of tribal government may be, how do things actually get done? When community members form their own organizations for action, how do they go about it and with whom? How large a role do kinship relations play in the daily affairs of the tribe? What are community perceptions of appropriate and inappropriate behavior on the part of tribal leaders, or of who can legitimately exercise power over whom? Is there an effective third-party enforcer in intra- and intergroup transactions? And so on. Asked directly, such questions often draw brief, abstract, and singularly uninformative answers, while narratives about specific events reveal the normative and institutional orders in action.

To whom do we talk? Everyone we can, but we target in particular: tribal executives, legislators, program managers, enterprise managers and staff, past members of tribal government, entrepreneurs, individuals involved in community (non-governmental) organizations, educators, elders. What we ask depends on whom we're talking to; we don't solicit the same stories from everyone. On the other hand, when possible, we triangulate: solicit stories from several individuals about the same event or activity.

The resulting stories range from "how that portion of the reservation came to be designated a wilderness" to "why the tribal judge was dismissed," from "what happened when so-and-so tried to start up a business" to "how we took control of our own council meetings away from the BIA." Some are brief: a few sentences. Others come in installments over lengthy periods of time. After interviews or other encounters, we use a tape recorder to summarize the stories and our reflections, searching for insights into the normative order of the community and for details of its recent history and patterns of organization and action. The stories, supplemented by other information sources, thus become the data we use to estimate the degree of match between contemporary formal institutions and normative order, and the degree of freedom the tribe currently exercises over its own affairs and institutional operations.

5. THE MEANINGS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: BEHAVIORAL STRATEGIES IN 218 HOUSEHOLDS

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The Meanings of Sustainable Development: Behavioral Strategies in 218 British Households

Karl Dake and Michael Thompson

Abstract

This paper presents a theory of household cultures, suggesting intimate connections among worldviews, patterns of social relations and the behavioral strategies that households use to make ends meet. It is argued that hierarchical, individualist, egalitarian and fatalist worldviews correspond to specific strategies for managing household needs and resources. Findings combining qualitative anthropological interviews with quantitative surveys of 218 British households illustrate the implications of this cultural theory for environmental attitudes and everyday behavior. Having put the very idea of sustainable development itself back into social relationships with family, friends and co-workers, a new approach is suggested for understanding how sociocultural systems and ecosystems interact in ordinary domestic groups.

Reality for the individual is, to a high degree, determined by what is *socially accepted* as reality. --Kurt Lewin[1]

Most of the discussion on sustainable economic development has been at the macro level: political and economic institutions have been considered, but there has been little thought given to behavior at the micro level, nor of the links or bridges between the two.[2] It goes without saying that sustainable development requires an understanding of how needs and resources are reconciled by those who constitute the market. Yet this apparently simple principle seems lost in economic models that assume outputs (e.g., economic growth, gross national product) follow directly from inputs (e.g., fiscal policies based on unquestioned assumptions--the individualist's assumptions--about how the world is and people are). Those who conduct research or design policy on such issues as the formation of environmentally-sensitive political institutions or economic processes must, inevitably, bring their own models of institutions and processes to bear upon environmental problems. And if those models happen not to be the same as the models that are held by those who are supposed to be forming the market infrastructures, or breathing life into the sustainable economies, then we should not be surprised if the hoped-for developments do not materialize.

1 See Kurt Lewin, Resolving social conflicts (New York: Harper & Row, 1948, p. 57); emphasis added.
2 See Karl Dake, Diana Khapaeva, Ray Pahl and Michael Thompson, "The Russian Change Makers" (1991, unpublished), where this macro/micro distinction is drawn out.

Studies of economic development usually assume that behavior is constrained by the needs people have and the resources that are available to them.[3] Needs, as it were, are given by human nature; resources by physical nature. It is up to them, through their social involvement, to reconcile their needs and their resources: to make these given ends meet. We believe that this is not so, or at least not above the level of physical survival. The conceptions of needs and resources that people have are constructed as part and parcel of their particular way of life.

Different ways of life, since they inculcate different cultural biases, supply their members with very different representations of needs and resources, thereby justifying very different behavioral strategies. What is economically rational for the follower of one way of life is irrational for the follower of another way; each is rational given his or her convictions about physical and human nature. The constraints on sustainable development, therefore, are located in the ways of life, not in the needs and resources themselves. Needs and resources are socially constructed.

This is not to say that there are no natural limits to the wants people can satisfy. Still, needs and resources have a certain social malleability; they are underdetermined by our own physiological properties and by the physical properties of the world in which we live. What, then, determines them? It is not only the physical, but also the moral constraints--the

3 See, for example, Albert O. Hirschman, Development projects observed (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1967).

availability of reasons acceptable to others for adopting and sustaining a strategy--that limits and shapes our strategies for making ends meet. These strategies are shareable (and therefore cultural) because they match the distinctive ideas of nature by which they are morally justified.

Managing Needs and Resources

Allowing for the social malleability of needs and resources enables us to deduce four equally legitimate possibilities:

1. You can manage neither your needs nor your resources (Fatalism).
2. You can manage your needs but not your resources (Egalitarianism).
3. You can manage your resources but not your needs (Hierarchy).
4. Your can manage both your needs and your resources (Individualism).

This fourfold scheme provides us with prototypes of the various rationalities that co-exist in any social entity; it allows us to specify just where that entity is in relation to the "feasibility space" within which sustainable development can be expected to happen.

Possibility 1 (Fatalism). You have no scope to manage your needs or your resources so you really cannot be said to have a management strategy. Your concern is to cope as best you can with an environment over which you have no control. The rational response if you find yourself at Possibility 1 is to hope that Lady Luck smiles on you--survive by coping.

This response is justified by a view of nature as essentially capricious. There are clearly plenty of resources out there, but the horn of plenty disgorges in your direction only when it is your lucky day. A matching response to environment can be achieved only be adopting an attitude of fatalism. Putting first things first, fatalists construct a view of nature that operates without rhyme or reason in order to sustain and dignify their way of life. Little development of any kind will occur where fatalism is the predominant cultural norm. For as long as fatalism is strong, few can reduce their needs so as to save and invest more, and take risks to increase their resources.

Possibility 2 (Egalitarianism). Because you perceive resources to be limited and you believe people can do nothing about them, your only available strategy is to decrease your needs so as to ensure a comfortable overlap. But it is no use doing this on your own. If resources are fixed and finite, then one person's gain is inevitably another's loss; to be effective, therefore, this need-reducing strategy will have to be followed by everyone. Little chance of that, you might think, but in an egalitarian and strongly collectivized social context individuals can all see the advantages of such behavior. For this lifestyle of "voluntary simplicity" to be rational behavior, nature cannot be viewed as plentiful; it must be perceived to be strictly accountable. Only then can resources be shared out equitably so that all count as one, and no one more than one. Indeed, those

who support egalitarianism are often more interested in (re)distribution of resources than in economic development.

Possibility 3 (Hierarchy). If you cannot do anything about your needs, the only available strategy is to increase your resources; that increase requires resource mobilization. Individually, the members of such groups within a hierarchy have little manipulative ability; collectively (by working to rule, for instance, or by compulsory levies on members) they are able to increase their resources as long as, in doing so, they do not overtake the groups above them. If this collective strategy is being pursued at all the different levels of the hierarchy (and it will have to be if the hierarchy itself is to remain in existence), the result is differential maintenance.

Most people, we suspect, will have little difficulty with the idea that you can manage your needs upward and downward. What may be more difficult for them to accept is that some people are not in a position to do this. But those individuals whose lives are hedged about with all sorts of socially imposed prescriptions will find it very difficult to do anything to their needs; these are, in one way or another, imposed on them by the hierarchy of which they are a part. Each person must spend according to the status ascribed to them. What they can do is work together collectively to raise their resources.

Possibility 4 (Individualism). As an entrepreneur you are not in the business of knowing your place; you are right in the middle of the turbulent stream of competitive individualism, where success comes to those who boldly and skillfully accept the

risks--the opportunities--that present themselves there. Nature is cornucopian, but it is not freely available; it is controlled by skill.

Individualism is not used here, however, in the sense of autonomous agents completely free from normative controls and constraints on behavior. Rather, individualists are viewed as social beings, generating and stabilizing a form of social relations--creating social sanctions that defend their right to bid and bargain in self-regulated networks. When individualism is too weak, development suffers for lack of moral support; when individualism is too strong, the "big men," to use the language of New Guinea tribes, may create "rubbish men" (fatalists).

According to cultural theory, these four strategies for making ends meet are the only ones that contain views of economizing congruent with the models of nature that serve to justify the corresponding ways of life.[4] Given their conviction that resources are limited, egalitarians would find it difficult to justify expanding resource use. Should hierarchies attempt to decrease needs, they could not justify the differentials required to support graded statuses. Supporters of each way of life construct their ends (their needs compared to their resources) to make their cultural biases meet up with their preferred pattern of social relations. Different behavioral strategies uphold different ways of life.

4 We discuss below a fifth way of life--the autonomous way--which is characterized by withdrawl from social relations. For a more complete discussion of autonomy, see Michael Thompson, Richard Ellis and Aaron Wildavsky, Cultural theory (Boulder, CO: Westview, pp. 39-53).

Now, with needs and resources linked to different modes of social relations, we can approach sustainable development from what is usually considered its end result: the various behaviors and preferences of consumers. To test the hypotheses described above we turn to an analysis of the environmental beliefs and lifestyles of a fundamental unit of consumption: the household.

Sustainable Behavioral Strategies

Although consumer researchers usually speak of "the consumer," the assumption guiding this research is that most goods are eventually consumed by households, not by isolated individuals.[5] Even individual shoppers are doing more than passively responding to prices and changing styles. The consumer often acts as an emissary for a household miniculture with its own history of social relationships, its distinctive way of making ends meet, and its particular behavioral strategy.

Our approach to households is based on the premise that values emerge from social interactions in defending or opposing different ways of life. People choose their values--sometimes consciously, often not--as part and parcel of the process of constructing, modifying or rejecting their institutions, especially that oldest of institutions: the domestic group. But shared beliefs and values, though varied, are not free to float

5 See, for example, Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood, The world of goods: Towards an anthropology of consumption. (New York: Basic Books, 1978).

about just anywhere. They are anchored to the social relations that they help sustain and render meaningful.[6]

When we talk about the household, and in particular about the management of needs and resources in the household, we are talking about those members of the family who live "under one roof." Those members of the family who are not under the roof are by no means irrelevant to the stability of those who are under it, but our focus is very much on the latter: the household. Many households, of course, are not families at all, as in the case of students sharing a house. More than that, a decreasing number of households conform to the image portrayed by the corn flake packet: breadwinner husband, home-maker wife and dependent children.[7] Hence, we distinguish between families, stressing lineage, and households, emphasizing co-residence.

Household consumption patterns, in our view, cannot be separated from the pattern of social relations and the cultural biases that sustain them. This implies that sustainable development is not viable unless it corresponds to a sustainable social entity. We explore this idea of viability by explaining our theory of household cultures, by noting selected findings

6 For a discussion of how values are tied to social relations, see Mary Douglas, "Cultural bias" (London: Royal Anthropological Institute, Occasional Paper, no. 35, 1978. Reprinted in Mary Douglas (Ed.), In the active voice (pp. 183-254). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982).

7 A good review of changing household demography is provided by Arlene Skolnick's Embattled paradise: The American family in an age of uncertainty (New York: Basic Books, 1991). See also A. Cherlin and F. F. Furstenberg, "The changing European family: Lessons for the American reader" (Journal of Family Issues, 9, (3), 291-297, 1988).

from our study of British households, and by drawing out the implications of these findings for sustainable development.

Our theory of the household may be described in terms of the classic social science distinction between two ways of organizing social life: markets and hierarchies. Since markets institute equality and promote competition, while hierarchies institute inequality and set limits on competition, this distinction, though useful, does not consider the other two possibilities: equality without competition (which we call egalitarianism) and inequality with competition (which we call fatalism).[8] These four ways of life, plus a hermit-like fifth way--autonomy--that is essentially a deliberate withdrawal from these four primary ways, are the fundamental patterns of social relationships from which all institutions--including the household--are put together.[9]

Our cultural theory of the household is novel in two important respects. First, it more than doubles the amount of variation described by the masters of social thought. If, as Durkhiem suggests, there are only two kinds of stability, organic and mechanical solidarity, then weakening one must invariably strengthen the other. Likewise, with Tönnies's gemeinschaft and gesellschaft, with Sir Henry Maine's historical transition from

8 Others have noted some but not all of these household forms. See, for instance, J. Trumbach, The rise of the egalitarian family: Aristocratic kinship and domestic relations in 18th century England (New York: Academic, 1978).
9 This rather bold claim is supported by recent evidence from the field of social cognition. See Alan Fiske, "The four elementary forms of sociality: Framework for a unified theory of social relations" (Psychological Review, in press).

status to contract, with Marx's relocation of control of the means of production from the bourgeoisie to the proletariat, and with Weber's distinction between markets and bureaucracies--if a theory allows only two states for a people to be in, then moving out of one must result in ending up in the other. By linking household dynamics to ways of organizing social life our typology provides for five, rather than two kinds of households, and therefore 20 kinds of household change (i.e., from any one of the five ways of life to one of the other four).[10]

Secondly, our theory is novel in maintaining that these five types of belief and social organization will be found, not just at the macro level of the nation-state, but at all social levels of analysis, even that of the household. This is because systems of beliefs--the values that people live by--are fundamentally social in character.[11] Hence, our theory forms a bridge over the classic macro/micro chasm in the social sciences.[12] The result, we argue, is that a household can be constituted in terms of any

10 Of course, the reasons why a household would change from one way of life to another are complex. Our theory leads us to expect a role for surprises--those times when a household finds that the world is not as their worldview held it to be. See A. Cherlin, "Changing family and household: Contemporary lessons from historical research" (Annual Review of Sociology, 9, 51-56, 1983).

11 Beliefs, values and cognitive processes that are usually thought of in terms of individual psychology are increasingly recognized as also fundamentally social. See, for instance, E. Resnick, J. M. Levine, and S. D. Teasley (Eds.), Perspectives on socially shared cognition. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 1992). See also C. Fraser and G. Gaskell (Eds.), The social psychology of widespread beliefs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

12 For a discussion of how cultural theory bridges these levels of analysis, see Aaron Wildavsky, "Can norms rescue self-interest or macro explanation be joined to micro explanation?" (Critical Review, 5, (3), 301-323, 1991).

of these cultures. On top of that, a household may be culturally plural, a negotiated alliance as it were, between any two of these five ways of life.[13]

We approach the analysis of households by distinguishing three levels of analysis: the pattern of social relations, the systematic cultural biases in beliefs and values, and the behavioral strategies that these combinations of patterned relations and cultural biases foster. Social relations are defined in terms of five kinds of social interaction: hierarchical, individualist, egalitarian, fatalist and autonomous. These relational forms, together with the behavioral strategies to which they give rise, engender distinctive representations of the needs and resources of a household.

Of course, if these relations, biases and strategies were unlimited in their variety we would be no further forward. However, we argue that this is never the case. All social entities, from the nation-state to the household, can be analyzed in terms of a complete typology of just five ways of organizing social life. Furthermore, the cultural differences among these social entities--the differences that matter for development--can be accounted for in terms of the relative strengths of these five ways of life and in terms of the alliances and oppositions to which their interactions give rise.

Assessing social relations. From the perspective of cultural theory, identity is mediated by an individuals' social

13 The alliances, and the conditions that have to be satisfied if they are to form, are described in Thompson et al. (1990); see footnote 4.

relations. Individuals who identify with groups that make economic decisions binding on all members will see themselves very differently than those "free spirits" who have weaker group involvement and therefore tend to make decisions that bind only themselves. And people whose lives are everywhere disciplined by an iron grid of things they must not do and moves they cannot make will have a very different notion of self than those who are not subject to those sorts of prescriptions. The key to an individual's identity is to be found in his relations with others.

Social relations, we maintain, have to be patterned, otherwise there would be no way in which a person could share his experience with those who are part of the same pattern. Nor, equally importantly, could he be aware of the differences between himself and those whose shared experiences are of different patterns. Patterns, in other words, are the prerequisite for what French sociologists call "la distinction."[14] These patterns, we have already suggested, can be characterized in terms of two discriminators: limited competition/unlimited competition and equality/inequality.[15] More formally, these

14 See Pierre Bourdieu, "La distinction: Critique sociale du judgment (Les Editions de Minuit, 1979).
15 Some readers may want to know why we use the term "discriminator," rather than the more straightforward "dimension." Those already familiar with cultural theory may wonder what has become of the labels "group" and "grid," that for many years, have been associated with these two "dimensions of sociality." The reason for our change is that dimension signifies a continuum, while discriminator signifies two qualitatively different states. If, as we are now arguing, it is the different patterns of relationships that are crucial, then it would be wrong to speak of dimensions. If, as can easily be demonstrated, you have to first dismantle one pattern before you

discriminators can be given expression in terms of the extent to which a person's transactions with others are symmetrical and the extent to which those with whom he transacts constitute a closed group (markets are symmetrical and open, hierarchies are asymmetrical and closed, egalitarian groups are symmetrical and closed, excluded margins characteristic of fatalism are asymmetrical and open). The first discriminator corresponds to Durkheim's concept of social regulation, and to its more recent formulation as structuration. The second discriminator is associated with Durkheim's concept of collective representation or, more precisely, to the related concept of incorporation. Cultural theory, therefore, taps into the two fundamental strands within social theory; its originality lies in its simultaneous handling of them both.[16]

We have developed interview methods for distinguishing among the different social patterns, and for assessing how strongly patterned those patterns are. A parallel survey instrument is needed for the structuration variable is needed to tell us how constrained individuals are by social norms (i.e., very constrained for hierarchists and fatalists, not very constrained for individualists and egalitarians). Likewise, the an

can put together another, then that transition is from a highly patterned state, through an unpatterned one, to another highly pattered state. This is not a transition that can be represented in dimensional terms, because the midpoint in a dimensional transition would be a mix of the two patterns, not a total absence of them both.

16 This is where the concepts of "grid" (i.e, structuration) and "group" (i.e., incorporation) come in from earlier formulations of cultural theory. See Jonathan Gross and Steve Rayner, Measuring culture: A paradigm for the analysis of social organization (Columbia University Press, 1985).

incorporation measure would tell us how strongly individuals are tied to each other (i.e., strongly for hierarchists and egalitarians, weakly for individualists and fatalists). Together with our interview methods, these measures would allow us to assess the role of social relations in forming the distinctive models of nature, the specific types of rationality, and the particular economic behaviors that serve to distinguish the different ways of life.

Assessing cultural biases. In telling us that economic development is a social experience based on moral commitments to particular ways of life, cultural theory offers a testable set of hypotheses regarding environmental perceptions, worldviews and economic strategies.[17]

Hierarchically arranged groups are hypothesized to foster the model that nature is "perverse or tolerant." Nature, this view holds, is robust, but only up to a point. Sustainable development is viewed as the rational strategy in hierarchical culture because this policy takes advantage of the perceived resilience of nature, but respects the limits as know by its duly certified experts.[18] In this worldview, the limits of ecosystems, and hence the appropriate resource conservation and

17 We characterize worldviews as orienting dispositions when referring to the individual level of analysis and as cultural biases when referring to collectively held beliefs and values. See Karl Dake, "Orienting dispositions in the perception of risk: An analysis of contemporary worldviews and cultural biases" (Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 1991, 22, (1), 61-82).
18 The term "sustainable development" originated in hierarchical organizations. No sooner was it coined, however, than a race was on to define its meaning. See G. H. Brundtland, "Global change and our common future," (Environment, 1989, 31, (5), 16-25).

development strategies, can be discovered only by experts. In economic policy, as in say, traditional family life, compliance to regulations is supposed to flow up the ranks of long-lasting institutions just as commands flow down.

Egalitarian groups--those with strong ingroup/outgroup boundaries, but with prescriptions that do not vary by rank and station--espouse the model that nature is "fragile." Just as the experts-know-best approach to development justifies hierarchical social relations, so the egalitarian view that nature is emphemeral justifies precautionary principles of environmental management. Egalitarian groups are often critical of the procedural rationality associated with hierarchy--who is allowed to do what with whom--because they prefer approaches to risk policies that foster equality of outcomes. In its radical form, egalitarianism calls for preservation (tabooing) of nature with rejection of much development as environmentally disruptive.

But it is precisely the collective community, defended and protected in hierarchical and egalitarian cultures, that is anathema when individualist forms of social relations prevail. Deregulation is seen as the rational risk management strategy in individualist cultures because individualists value decisions stemming from personal judgment rather than collective control. In contrast, cultures of fatalism--those with high levels of prescription but minimal collective participation--hold the model of nature as "capricious." Fatalists may have been excluded from the other ways of organizing social life: those who cannot compete successfully in markets, who cannot meet the minimum

social standards of bounded and stratified groups, and who cannot muster the time, energy, or motivation for economic investment. Or fatalists may be those who simply want to be free of well wishers' influences. Either way, fatalists rationalize isolation and resignation to stringent controls on their behavior. "Why bother" is the rational economic policy for those who lack the self-regulation of individualists and the group solidarity of hierarchical or egalitarian collectivists.

We have designed survey measures of cultural biases to inform us about the moral constraints and supports for development. Do individuals in the region believe that people should be rewarded according to their position in society, or on the basis of merit? Should the government make sure everyone has a good standard of living, or concentrate its efforts on regional security? Is there support for capitalism, or general suspicion and hostility toward economic institutions? We have made substantial progress on measuring cultural biases in America, Britain, Norway, Russia, and elsewhere, but we anticipate a significant effort in adapting our measures for use in cross-national comparisons.[19]

Assessing behavioral strategies. If beliefs about economic behavior are imbedded in a few elementary forms of social relations, then it should be possible, in principle, to demonstrate the functional interactions among worldviews, social relations and the behavioral strategies used to make ends meet.

19 For a sample of the survey instruments for assessing cultural biases, see Karl Dake, "Myths of nature: Culture and the social construction of risk" (Journal of Social Issues, in press).

Of course, no single ideological or behavioral characteristic will be sufficient to assign individuals, groups or institutions to cultural categories. A given person may participate in a variety of social settings, say, communal sharing (egalitarianism) at home, and individualism at work. Some persons or groups may hold contradictory beliefs as often as not (although we expect this to be more likely among fatalists). And situational factors surely play an important role in determining which forms of social organization prevail in which settings. Moreover, the "goodness of fit" in estimating cultural commitments from patterns of behavioral attributes may vary because the measurement tool and the classification decision are not one in the same. How high, for example, does a score on a measure of individualism have to be before one is classified as an individualist?

Our endeavor in cultural classification is made more difficult by mixed cultural orientations, complex alliances and evolving worldviews. Still, if worldviews and social relationships tend to covary, then with due consideration for different emergent properties at different levels of analysis, we should be able shed light on the interaction between socio-cultural systems and economic systems.

To create a cultural theory of sustainable development, we would need measures of behavioral strategies focused on economic life. Is money saved? Are investments made? What constitutes a socially acceptable financial risk? Who is allowed to make which economic decisions? Is there always trouble with the creditors?

Does one spend more or less than the neighbors--whether they be the next household, or village, or the nearest nation-state? Answers to such questions would allow us to make inferences about which behavioral strategy is being followed and by whom. For instance, political conflicts over such issues would reveal the organization of rights and obligations and underscore the economic interests in a community. We have taken the initial steps in these directions in our study of 200 British households. It is to our theory of household cultures that we now turn.

Household Cultures

The first empirical tests of cultural theory were conducted by Karl Dake and Aaron Wildavsky using personality assessment samples collected under a grant from the National Science Foundation to the University of California's Institute of Personality Assessment and Research, in Berkeley. The Cultural Biases Questionnaire developed by Dake and Wildavsky included self-report measures of hierarchy ("I think there should be more discipline in the youth of today"), individualism ("In a fair system people with more ability should earn more"), and egalitarianism ("If people in this country were treated more equally we would have fewer problems"). These studies provide substantial empirical support for the role of cultural biases in environmental perception.[20] They also extend a previous line of research showing that measures of worldviews are related in one

20 See Aaron Wildavsky and Karl Dake, "Theories of risk perception: Who fears what and why?" (Daedalus, 119, (4), 41-60, 1990).

direction to traditionally assessed values and personality traits, and in another direction to social attitudes, lifestyles and demographic characteristics.[21]

The findings presented here draw upon a 1990-1991 survey of the beliefs and lifestyles of 220 British households from London, Lancashire, and Merseyside, England. To establish how successful we were at understanding these households, a sub-sample of individuals who completed the questionnaire were also interviewed by an anthropologist in their homes. Both the questionnaire analysis (N=220) and the anthropological interviews (N=77) were conducted blind (i.e., neither was done with a knowledge of what the other had concluded).[22]

The interviews were based on the theme of "managing needs and resources," while the surveys included ordinary household behaviors so as to compare what is believed with how each family actually lives (e.g., whether roles are strongly gendered, children disciplined to do their homework, meals set at a standard time). Because of our detailed enthnographic method, we know a great deal more about our participants than usual (e.g., whether the workday often runs late, whether there problems with creditors, whether health requirements are important in food choices). Moreover, in 1991 we re-surveyed 53 of the households

21 See David M. Buss, Kenneth H. Craik and Karl M. Dake, "Contemporary worldviews and perception of the technological system" (In V. T. Covello, J. Menkes and J. Mumpower (Eds.), Risk evaluation and management (pp. 93-130). New York: Plenum, 1986).

22 We achieved an average agreement rate of 80% between the surveys and the interviews, suggesting a high degree of convergent validity in classifying households.

we had studied in 1990 so that we could check our findings, improve our measures and estimate the degree of lifestyle change over time.

In general terms, our findings suggest that: (1) ideas about the environment, technology and development and so on develop in the context of the person's cultural bias (Table 1); and (2) household behaviors are closely related to the pattern of social relations in the home (Figure 1). As expected, we find social relations, cultural biases and behavioral strategies to be interrelated in fundamental ways.

Toward a Socially-Viable Model of Sustainable Development

By conceiving of cultures as modes of organizing social life, each of which is found (albeit in different proportions) in every social entity, rather than as tribes or races or nationalities, much mischief is avoided. There is no need to ask or answer harmful questions like "Whose traditions are superior?" Invidious distinctions of many kinds need not become the object of contention, seeing that each race or ethnicity or nationality contains all the cultures.

A pluralist approach to culture also sidesteps (by rendering irrelevant) the alleged conflict between "tradition" and "modernity." If "tradition" means anything more than national or group history in all its particularity, including how things used to be done, it is a synonym for hierarchy. Similarly, "modernity," if it stands for anything more than being up-to-date, signifies individualistic culture. In short, "tradition

versus modernity" stands for the overwhelming concern of social theorists with the movement from the collectivist hierarchy of the Middle Ages to the competitive individualism of industrial capitalism. But it does no good to repeat the question--How to achieve sustained economic development?--in the form of an answer: Move from tradition to modernity. What is necessary to move away from is best expressed in cultural terms--fatalism and exclusive (one might say "monopolistic") hierarchy--and to move toward individualism in coalition with inclusive hierarchy. One objective is to diminish the fatalistic view that investment is doomed to fail ("You can't outguess Mother Nature") and that cooperation is counterproductive ("You can't trust human nature"). Because rule by exclusive hierarchies increases fatalism (people are not allowed to "make the rules that govern their lives") and stultifies development ("the center knows best"), it should give way to inclusive hierarchy ("my father's house has many mansions"). While hierarchy, by itself, changes too slowly to encourage economic growth, it serves as an essential companion to restrain and stabilize individualism. Hierarchy is essential to maintain order, to collect debts, to create rules for private property and economic transactions, and to maintain a sense of community.

Egalitarianism, in turn, is essential for maintaining political equality and for keeping individualists and hierarchists honest. But too much egalitarianism (like too much of any of the other three cultures) is antithetical to development. The reason is that insistent demands for equality

of condition exacerbate racial and ethnic conflict and redistribute resources before they have been obtained.

Our cultural theory does not allow for people to float free of their personal convictions, but it does allow for them to recognize what their convictions are, and to see how they differ from those that are held by others. Such "self-reflexivity" has important implications, not just for our understanding of why development happens (and doesn't happen), but also for our understanding of what sustainable development is.

For the past two decades, cultural theorists have been studying how competing cultures confer different meanings on situations, events, objects and especially relationships.[23] Their argument is consistent with the theme being developed here--that consumption patterns, resource mobilizations and investment strategies are everywhere and always biased by legitimized social groupings, that is, by institutions embodied in everyday, ordinary interactions with family, friends and peers. The idea is straightforward: adherence to a certain pattern of social relationships generates a particular way of looking at the world; adherence to a certain worldview legitimizes a corresponding kind of behavior---and therefore a corresponding kind of economic activity.

Cultural theory leads us to the expectation that markets work, not because they are made up by autonomous agents free from

23 See, for instance, Mary Douglas, "Environments at risk," (Times Literary Supplement, 1970. Reprinted in Douglas, M., Implicit Meanings: Essays in anthropology (pp.230-248). Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975).

the impediments of social sanctions, but because they are made up of distinctive social beings who, in acting a particular way and in generating a particular set of beliefs, are able to promote and stabilize a correponding way of life. Some--the energetic, the skillful, the adventurous, the lucky--are able to operate through the impressive personal networks that this mode of social organization inevitably gives rise to. Others--those less energetic, less skilful, less adventurous, less lucky--find themselves always out at the peripheries of other people's networks and never at the centers of their own. This bifurcation--network centrality versus network peripherality--is, therefore, the normal state of affairs when group relations are absent or little developed.

Cultural theory then goes on to show that a quite different bifurcation is found in those reaches of social life where group relationships predominate and individualism is muted. Here it is the various dynamics of group formation--boundary creation, internal differentiation, incorporation, exclusion, and so on--that continually act to separate the hierarchists and egalitarians.

If hierarchy is under attack--if that, above all else is the nature of current economic transitions in many regions--we can now see that there are two quite separate directions in which it is being dismantled: one away from collectivized patterns and toward individualized ones; the other away from differentiated

statuses and towards equalized ones.[24] With measures of culture in place, we will be well positioned to understand these dynamics of socio-cultural change and hence to make empirically-based policy recommendations for sustainable economic development. Even now there is general agreement that fatalism, if it is predominant, should be decreased. It is also understood that individualism and hierarchy have to work together for economic growth--and that a healthy dose of egalitarianism will encourage that constructive interaction. This understanding, we believe, takes us further than we have been.

Neoclassical economics has served economic development well. But not everywhere and not well enough. But looking more closely at culture, at the institutionally generated motivations that work for and against sustainable economic development, we hope to create cultural instruments for doing better.

24 The first of these will give us intensification of the individualism/fatalism bifurcation. The second will give us an increasingly critical and uncompromising rejection of individualism and withdrawal into egalitarian enclaves in which everything that is despised by devotees of the enterprise culture is celebrated and visa versa. See Michael Thompson, "The dynamics of cultural theory and their implications for the enterprise culture." (In A. Ross (Ed.), Understanding the enterprise culture, pp. 182-202. Edinburgh University Press, 1992).

Table 1

Correlates of Cultural Biases: Environmentalism

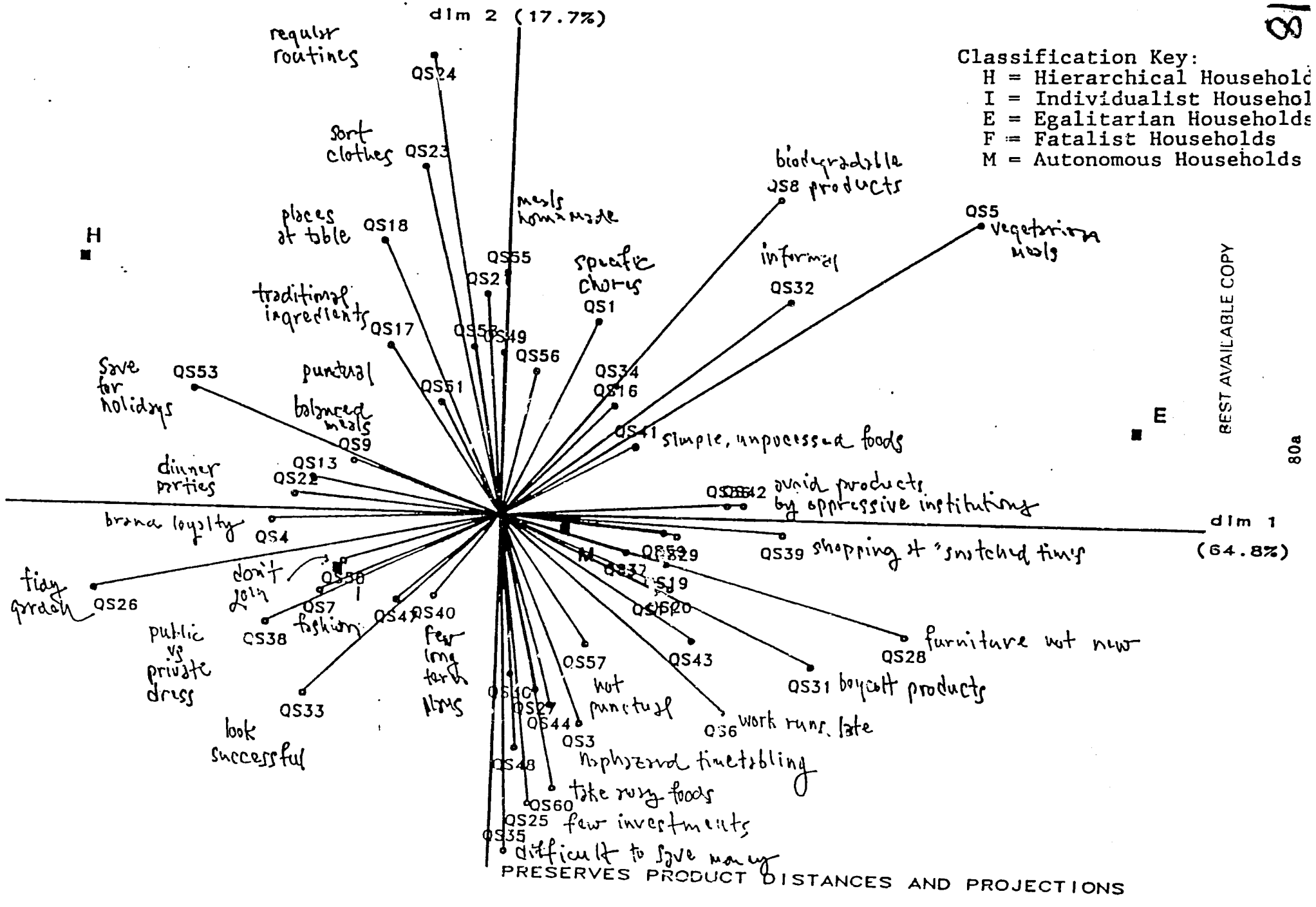
	Cultural Biases		
	Egalitarianism	**Hierarchy**	**Individualism**
Environmentalism scale: (mean of survey items below).			
Time 1	.57**	-.52*	-.56**
Time 2	.54**	-.39**	-.57**
Environmentalism items:			
The problems of the environment are not as bad as so-called experts have told people.			
Time 1	-.51**	.52**	.54**
Time 2	-.34*	.20	.41**
Concern about the environment restricts industry too much.			
Time 1	-.45**	.41**	.27
Time 2	-.49**	.24	.33*
Large businesses have too much influence on ordinary people.			
Time 1	.51**	-.47**	-.49**
Time 2	.43**	-.35*	-.37**
Industry, left to itself, will harm the environment.			
Time 1	.29*	-.35**	-.20**
Time 2	.19	-.33*	-.34*
The general public only knows about a few of the many risks associated with modern technology.			
Time 1	.32*	-.20	-.40*
Time 2	.30*	-.34*	-.48**
Those in power often withhold information about things which are harmful to us.			
Time 1	.22*	.06	-.28*
Time 2	.28**	-.08	-.19

Table 1 Continued.

	Cultural Biases		
	Egalitarianism	**Hierarchy**	**Individualism**
Unless the progress of technology is limited, our society may become unsafe in the next 20 years.			
Time 1	.18	-.29*	-.38**
Time 2	.32*	-.29*	-.49**
There are too many laws controlling technology.			
Time 1	-.15	.19	.29*
Time 2	-.31*	.17	.38**
The misuse of technology is a serious problem in the world today.			
Time 1	.26	-.21	-.14
Time 2	.20	-.12	-.11

Note: n_t=53 residents of London, Lancashire and Merseyside, England. Time 1 refers to data collected in Study 1 (1990, n_1=56); Time 2 to Study 2 (1991, n_2=220). These correlates are from the test-retest participants who took part in both studies.
* $p<.05$ ** $p<.01$

Figure 1. Discriminant Functions Relating Interview Classifications to Lifestyles.



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6. INFORMAL NOTES ON TWO ADDITIONAL PAPERS

After the workshop Michael Cernea and John Ogbu submitted papers they had previously written, relevant to but not precisely on topics raised in our workshop. Here are brief renditions.

Notes on Michael M. Cernea, "Re-tooling in Applied Social Investigation for Development Planning: Some Methodological Issues," in *Rapid Assessment Procedures: Qualitative Methodologies for Planning and Evaluation of Health Related Programmes*, ed. Nevin S. Scrimshaw and Gary R. Gleason (Boston: International Nutrition Foundation for Developing Countries, 1992).

Rapid appraisal techniques, which have exploded over the past decade, display four major trends:

1. Repertoire enrichment, with many new and imaginative procedures for data gathering.
2. Content-specific techniques, for areas like health, forestry, and irrigation.
3. Geographic broadening.
4. A growing shift from technique to substance.

"By cost-effectively providing knowledge about the actors of development themselves, RAPs [rapid appraisal procedures] can increase planners' ability to *put people first* in development projects." Moreover, "a decade of RAP work has launched some *social sciences on a path of methodological re-tooling*." (p. 13, emphases in original)

The problems to which RAPs were an answer: "Time and again, project ill-match after project ill-match, failure after project failure, were traceable to the dearth of good information on the local society," but also "practical project activities could hardly wait for research designed to last several years" (13).

The list of RAPs would include:

> novel forms of direct observation and participant observation; researcher's [sic] participation in the studied activity; semi-structured interviews; group interviews; focus groups; mapping; aerial photographs; group walks; diagramming; quantifications; ranking; group reading of satellite imagery; simulation games and role playing; sondeo techniques and small team investigations; imaginative selection of key information as in chain-interviews; procedures for eliciting the subject's assessments; self-definition; etc. (13-4)

But Cernea argues that RAPs carry "epistemological risks." They are limited as investigative tools: their accuracy, representativeness, "cultural inappropriateness," and subjectivity are questioned. "

> It should never be forgotten that on the birth certificate of RAPs, a trade-off was inscribed--the trade-off between research duration, on the one hand, and the

quantity and accuracy of collected information, on the other hand. This trade-off is not an original sin. It rather is the original blessing with which these procedures have entered a world in great need of knowledge but always short of time. Yet speed of acquisition, even when proudly worn on the sleeve, has cognitive costs, not only benefits." (16)

Robert Chambers spoke of the principles of "optimal ignorance" and "appropriate imprecision." Cernea asks the question another way: When is rapid not slow enough?

True, RAPs are usually more methodical and accurate than "the highly informal, bordering on the irresponsible, amateurish manners in which many project appraisers, planners or supervisors used to patch a smattering of data and fugitive impressions, knitted together with their own ethnocentric assumptions credited as hard facts." (17) But experience has shown that the "appropriate imprecision" of RAPs can "snowball," compromising the data and the project design. "I have seen it at work, wreaking havoc." (17)

Unfortunately, the answer to the question "how rapid?" depends on the problem being studied and the decisions to be taken. An example of a useful and very rapid technique: gauging poverty by focusing on only two variables, the wage for labor and the extent of (free) access to health services. But in studies of "the self-organization of communities," shortcuts are not yet available. Here Cernea cites a

> simple question that infallibly opened many doors to understanding various community systems of social organization. More importantly, this question is easy to ask, easy to understand, and is always quickly and eagerly answered. I ask: 'When a family's hut and crops happen to catch fire and burn down, how does the village help out that family?" (18)

Cernea recommends training in RAP techniques and their use by social scientists "already trained in their disciplines' basic field methods" and by "planners, economic analysts and technical specialists." (19)

RAPs "are not a substitute for long term basic research methods." (20) Cernea says that in the case of involuntary population displacement, as from a dam site, "I would be more than a little worried if such planning would be expedited through low-cost, informal, shortcut procedures." (20)

In a letter following our workshop, Cernea was blunter about the risks of RAPs. "Let us also distance ourselves from the uncritical acceptance of 'rapid procedures.' Some of these very 'rapid' things are pseudo sociological smoke and mirrors, rather than the systematic data collection or in-depth assessment of complex social and cultural realities . . Instant coffee is feasible and occasionally even tasty, but instant cultural analysis is a danger to our health (and to development)."

In his letter Cernea made other points.

> What I think was most important in the context you set up so well for our discussion was the need to identify and define the social *variables* on which we should focus our cultural investigative lasers. Unfortunately, the term social is so

broad and so often abused that many "good people" forget to deconstruct it into specific and measurable variables. Such more rigorously defined variables need to be substituted for amorphous discussions, about 'sociocultural aspects.

One other point I would like to make, to complement my criticism of econocratic and technocratic approaches, is to say that we social researchers have our very own sins and weaknesses. What you often hear from some "certified" social scientists, in response to econocratic approaches, is nothing more than what I would call "sociobabble." It may be "sociobabble with a heart," but it nevertheless remains sociobabble, circuitous general talk, not conducive to incremental knowledge, nor leading to action and operational steps. Social researchers have to pitilessly clean their writings of such sociobabble and replace it with professional, I repeat *professional*, discussions of variables and profession definitions of tools. I have in mind specific tools for social analysis and professionally designed procedures and strategies for collective social actions. Exhortations and advocacy for eliminating certain defects of policies or programs must be replaced with social procedures that would effectively prevent such defects.

Notes on John U. Ogbu, "Understanding Cultural Diversity and Learning," *Educational Researcher*, Nov. 1992.

Ogbu observes that advocates of culturally sensitive education rarely address effectiveness in terms of academic performance (p. 6).

"What is also instructive is that there are minority groups whose language expressions, mathematical or number systems, and overt cultural behaviors might be different enough from those of White Americans to be considered barriers to learning math and science but whose members, nevertheless, learn more or less successfully. That is, they are able, eventually, to cross cultural and language boundaries and succeed academically." (6) Simply calling for multicultural education is inadequate because it fails to separate those who succeed " in spite of initial cultural barriers" from those who do not.

"Studies outside the United States have also found that minority children do not fail in school because of mere cultural/language differences or succeed in school because they share the culture and language of the dominant group." (7) Ogbu cites many examples.

There is a major distinction in the way minorities see themselves: (1) autonomous, immigrant or voluntary, and (2) castelike or involuntary.

> Voluntary minorities seem to bring to the United States a sense of who they are from their homeland and seem to retain this different but non-oppositional social identity at least during the first generation. Involuntary minorities, in contrast, develop a new sense of social or collective identity that is in opposition to the social identity of the dominant group after they have become subordinated. They do so in response to their treatment by White Americans in economic, political, social, psychological, cultural, and language domains. (9)

"Involuntary minorities interpret the cultural and language differences as markers of their collective identity to be maintained, not as barriers to be overcome." (10) "Moreover, they lack the positive dual frame of reference of the immigrants, who compare their progress in the United States with that of their peers 'back home.'" (11)

Ogbu encourages a policy of helping minorities segment their activities, without losing their self-concept (or risking excessive peer pressure).

> Fourth, programs are needed to increase students' adoption of the strategy of "accommodation without assimilation," "alternation model," or "playing the classroom game." The essence of this strategy is that students should recognize and accept the fact that they can participate in two cultural or language frames of reference for different purposes without losing their own cultural and language identity or undermining their loyalty to the minority community. They should learn to practice "when in Rome, do as the Romans do," without becoming Roman. (12)

Ogbu provides, however, no evidence about how such programs work, or how successfully.

In a letter following the workshop, Ogbu made some additional points. He cited a number of studies of "*traditional* voluntary associations in some African societies that

were instrumental in community affairs, both economic and non-economic," in particular in Dahomey before the French conquest in 1893 (studied by Herskovits) and the Yako of southeastern Nigeria (studied by Ford).

Ogbu recommended following up on such traditional organizations. And "I would refer to the culture as an ethnic group within the nation. If these organizations survived colonial rule, in what form are they now? What are their present functions? How might they be relevant to the problem at hand? What other organizations have emerged as the result of societal changes resulting from colonial rule, education, urbanization, etc.?

"Unfortunately, I am not aware of any systematic study of these indigenous organizations in their contemporary form and function."

Ogbu described his current writing on "the social construction of cultural differences by different minorities."

> This is partly in response to the tendency to lump all cultural differences together as if they mean the same thing to the different peoples. They do not. That is why it is difficult to talk in terms of *cultural variables* . . Cultural variables to be a significant factor in policy and planning must also be considered with their associated meanings for the target populations. At least, this is what I seem to be discovering in my comparative work in education.