

Chapter 2

The Embedding of Encounters

The Unfolding of Social Reality

The Emergence and Power of the Macro Realm

The first human societies were built around small bands of hunter-gatherers organized into nucleated kinship units (composed of mother, father, children). These first societies were obviously not macro in the contemporary sense, but the history of human societies has involved episodic movements toward ever-larger societal and inter-societal formations. This evolution has not been linear, of course; periods of growth and increased complexity have been followed by societal disintegration, only to be reintegrated as new sociocultural formations have been built up. Beginning around 10,000 years ago, however, these episodic cycles became shorter and the scale of societies and inter-societal began to increase across an ever greater proportion of the human population; and today, the evolution of a complex macro level of social reality clearly constrains what individual and corporate actors in a society can do.

This macro reality is constructed from institutional domains, which are sets of groups and organizations located in communities that deal with problems of sustaining a population in an environment. I have termed these problems *selection pressures* because they push on individual and collective actors to find new ways to (a) produce goods and commodities, (b) distribute sufficient resources to support the larger population, (c) regulate, coordinate, and control activities by actors in this population, and (d) reproduce members and the structures coordinating their activities (Turner 1995, 2003, 2010a; Turner and Maryanski 2008a, b). These selection pressures first arose from population growth that made older, simpler forms of social organization unviable. One way to look at these early selection pressures from population growth is as *first-order logistical loads* that individual and

corporate actors must manage, or face the disintegrative consequences. As the complexity of the sociocultural formations evolved in response to these first-order logistical loads from population growth, *second-order logistical loads* arose from this very complexity and generated a new round of selection pressures to produce and distribute resources to the larger and more differentiated population, to regulate and control its activities, and to reproduce individuals for diverse positions in the more complex division of labors in corporate units. These first- and second-order logistical loads and the selection pressures that they generate constantly have put pressure on individual and corporate units to find solutions to reducing these loads over the last ten millennia, and if solutions are not forthcoming, a societies have disintegrated or been conquered by more powerful and efficiently organized societies. The history of humans on earth, then, has revolved around a constant battle to meet rising logistical loads that come with population growth and increasing societal complexity.

Second-order logistical loads increase not only from differentiation of diverse institutional domain – e.g., kinships, economy, polity, law, religion, education, arts, sport, science, medicine – but also from the inequalities that institutional domains generate. Each institutional domain distributes valued resources, and as societies become more complex, each does so unequally. Out of this unequal distribution of money, power, prestige, piety, learning, influence, knowledge, health, competitiveness, and aesthetics emerges a stratification system composed of classes that are rank ordered by their respective shares and configurations of resources (Turner 1984, 2010a, b, c). Inequality always generates tensions, and thus, one of the most powerful second-order logistical loads comes from inequality and stratification which, if not managed, will tear a society apart.

It may seem strange to begin a book on the micro-level of human social organization with such a grand narrative. Yet, as will become clear, what occurs in encounters of face-to-face interaction is almost always embedded in larger-scale structures and processes. We do not need to examine in detail the dynamics driving the operation of these larger-scale structures and their cultures (see Vol. 1 of *Theoretical Principles of Sociology*), but it is necessary to remain attuned to the fact that interaction is constrained by these structures. This constraint is mediated by two basic types of meso-level structures and their cultures: (1) *corporate units* that ultimately are the building blocks of institutional domains and the units (within domains) distributing resources unequally and (2) *categoric units* that often serve as the building blocks of stratification systems. Encounters are almost always embedded in both corporate and categoric units; and it is typically through these meso-level

structures and their cultures that the macro-level of reality exerts its influence on what transpires in the micro realm of social reality.

The Meso Realm of Reality

Corporate Units. The outcome of the battle to stave off the disintegrative pressures from logistical loads has been the evolution of institutional domains, and as noted above, these domains are built from corporate units, such as *organizations*, revealing a division of labor to achieve specific goals. These organizational corporate units are located in geographical corporate units, or *communities*. In turn, corporate units are built up from *group structures* composed of individuals engaged in iterated interactions within organizational corporate units. In the history of human societies, then, there have been only three basic types of corporate units at the meso level of social organization: *groups*, *organizations*, and *communities*. Groups are periodic gatherings of individuals to achieve some end, which can be as vague as achieving sociality and companionship or as instrumental as accomplishing some specific task; organizations are larger and more enduring, structures organizing groups in divisions of labor to achieve what are typically more clear-cut goals that are defined by the nature of the institutional domain in which they are lodged (e.g., education, economy, polity, law, science); and communities are spatial units that regulate sections of territory in order to coordinate the activities of individuals in corporate units.

Encounters are embedded in one and, quite often, all three basic types of corporate units. For example, an encounter among members of a group of individuals in an academic department occurs within the larger organizational systems – the university or college – that in turn is embedded within a community. Moreover, the university is also embedded within an institutional domains – i.e., education – that is nested inside a societal system and, in the case of many universities, in an inter-societal system. Just which of these structures has the most influence on what transpires in an encounter can vary, depending upon the individuals and their place in the corporate units of the institutional domain of education. Thus, while some encounters may not be embedded in meso and macro structures, most are. They are part of a complex web of embeddedness in meso- and macro-level sociocultural formations. On the one hand, this embedding makes encounters more complicated, but on the other hand, the number of formations in which encounters can potentially be embedded is limited to groups, organizations,

communities, institutional domains, societies, and inter-societal systems, and as I will discuss shortly, categoric units that are lodged in stratification systems which, in turn, are nested in societal and, potentially, inter-societal systems. The structure and culture of these meso- and macro-level units constrain what can transpire in encounters, and reciprocally, the interactions in encounters sustain, reproduce, and at times, change the structure and culture of these meso and macro units.

Certain properties of corporate units increase the clarity of expectations guiding all microdynamic processes. These are listed in Table 2.1. One key property is the degree to which the boundaries of a corporate unit are explicit, such that persons know when they have crossed this boundary and entered the corporate unit. For example, walking through the doors of a building housing a corporate unit is a very clear boundary, separating the division of labor of the unit from its environment. At other times, the boundaries of corporate units are vague, as is the case when entering a community where the boundaries are so extensive, it is difficult to know for sure what elements of such a large corporate unit are relevant. Even entering a shopping mall does not make it clear which boundaries apply – the mall as a corporate unit or its stores? The greater the clarity of the boundaries, the more likely will individuals be aware of the meanings of the ecology and demography of a setting, the relative status of persons, the roles that can be played, the normative expectations, the motive states that can be realized, and the emotions

Table 2.1 Properties of corporate units. Increasing clarity of expectation in encounters

1. Visibility of the boundaries of a corporate unit, separating the division of labor within the unit from its surrounding environment
2. Clarity of the entrance and exit rules that inform individuals when and where the culture and structure of the corporate unit is relevant
3. The explicitness of the goals and the degree of focus of the division of labor of a corporate unit on these goals
4. The explicitness of the positions in the horizontal and vertical divisions of labor in corporate units specifying tasks and relative authority
5. The formality of the structure and culture of a corporate unit and its division of labor
6. The degree of consolidation or correlation of positions in the division of labor, particularly the vertical division of labor, with memberships in discrete categoric units
7. The degree of relative autonomy of the institutional domain in which a corporate unit is embedded from other institutional domains
8. The level of consistency among generalized symbolic media, ideologies, and norms governing the operation of the corporate unit as a whole and its internal divisions of labor

that are to be felt and displayed. A related, second property of corporate units is their entrance and exist rules that can facilitates recognition of boundaries. The more entrances and exits are marked off, and the more they involve ritual acts when crossing a corporate-unit boundary, the more likely will individuals understand the expectations guiding encounters. The simple act, for example, of punching a time card, showing an ID card, or having a hand stamped accentuates that the rules applying to the division of labor of the corporate unit are now in effect, or having to open the door to a classroom after it begins signals that classroom demeanor rules are now in effect; without such explicit entrance-exit markers, individuals will often need to work at establishing what rules with respect to what elements of the division of labor are relevant. A third property of corporate units is the clarity of the unit's goals, which increases the likelihood that individuals will understand expectations for all microdynamic processes. When the division of labor within a corporate-unit and its culture are organized to meet specific goals, individuals are much more likely to understand relevant expectations for encounters that occur within this division of labor. For instance, entering a university laboratory devoted to a particular line of research generates clear expectations for what individuals are supposed to do, as does entering a workplace, church, or school. The goals provide the frame establishing what is relevant and irrelevant for individuals. A fourth property is the explicitness of the vertical and horizontal divisions of labor in corporate units which also increase clarity of expectations tied to tasks and lines of authority; and when these are spelled out, individuals are able to form and navigate encounters among those in the same and different positions and roles. A fifth property is the formality of the structure and culture of a corporate unit, which specifies the rituals, forms of talk, deference of demeanor, status and roles, relevant norms, appropriate motivational states, and emotions that can be expressed. Formality makes encounters less fluid and spontaneous, but it always increases clarity of, and consensus over, expectations. A sixth property is the degree of consolidation or correlation of positions in the divisions of labor with discrete categoric units. If, for example, all decision makers are male and all secretaries are female – a situation that at one time was quite common in business corporate units – expectations for members of diverse categoric units and for positions in the hierarchical division of labor reinforce each other and, thereby, make expectations for behaviors in encounters clear (at the price, however, of higher inequality).

Other properties of corporate units are related to their embeddedness in the structure and culture of institutional domains. Thus, a seventh property of corporate units is the degree of autonomy of the institutional domains in which they are embedded. When a domain is relatively autonomous with its

own distinctive generalized symbolic medium, ideology, and institutional norms, corporate units within this domain are more likely to be organized by these cultural elements, allowing individuals to understand expectations for encounters within the division of labor of the units in a domain. For instance, churches, schools, businesses, teams, medical clinics and other corporate units are embedded in relatively autonomous domains, making it much easier for individuals to determine the culture of the situation and the expectations on diverse actors in encounters. An eighth and related property is the degree of consistency among generalized symbolic media, ideologies, and norms; the more consistent these are at the institutional level, the more likely are the corporate unit's division of labor and goals toward which this labor is directed to be clear, thereby making it easier for individuals to frame the relevant expectations in encounters.

These varying properties of corporate units and their embedding within institutional domains and, at times, the stratification system (when there is a high correlation of categoric unit memberships with positions in the divisions of labor in corporate units) highlight the importance of embedding as a constraint on microdynamic forces. If we ignore embedding, we will miss some of the key dynamics of encounters (Grannovetter 1985). Moreover, we will also fail to analyze how encounters can, at times, be the seedbeds for social change in meso and macro sociocultural formations. Social change comes when actors in iterated encounters within corporate units push for change or create new kinds of corporate units as a means for responding to selection pressures arising from first- and second-order logistical loads. For most encounters, however, the actions of individuals are constrained by the pattern of embedding – that is, groups lodged in organizations within communities and institutional domains that, in turn, are nested in societies which are part of inter-societal systems. The structure and culture of these embedded corporate units will have very large effects on the loadings of the forces that drive encounters, and while these can be diverse and complex, they are nonetheless delimited and can be theorized, as I hope to demonstrate in the pages to follow.

Categoric Units. The other basic type of meso-level unit in which encounters are always embedded is the categoric unit, which are defined by a *parameter* marking individuals as distinctive (Blau 1977, 1994a). As I noted in the last chapter, parameters can be *nominal* or *graduated*, with nominal parameters placing individuals inside (or outside) a discrete categoric unit and with graduated parameters marking individuals' location along a scale. In actual practice, however, graduated parameters are often converted into rough nominal parameters during the course of interaction. For example, years of education is translated into categories such as high

school dropout, high school diploma, college education, and graduate education; or age is broken down into such categories as infant, young, middle aged, old, and very old; or income is divided into rough categories like poor, rich, average income, and affluent.

At first glance, it seems odd to visualize encounters as lodged in categoric units, but there is a rather large literature on status characteristics, and especially on *diffuse status characteristics*, to document the effects that embedding in categoric units has on behaviors of individuals in encounters (see, for example, Berger et al. 1977; Berger and Zelditch 1985; Berger 1998). Indeed, a moment of reflection will document this effect. An encounter composed of all males will suddenly change when females begin to participate; an encounter of two old people will be very different when younger persons enter; an encounter among members of one ethnic categoric unit will be very different from one where multiple ethnic categories are co-present.

For each categoric unit, there are *status beliefs* that are translated into *expectation states* for how individuals should act as members of a social category (Ridgeway 1982, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2006). To some degree, these expectations arise from the differential evaluation of categoric units. Expectations for members of highly valued social categories will be different from those who are incumbent in devalued categories. The differential evaluation of categoric units is generally tied to the resources that members of a categoric unit can command, and the resources of members are an outcome of the unequal distribution of resources in corporate units within institutional domains. For example, if high and low education represent a categoric unit in a society, the valued resource – i.e., learning – has been unequally distributed, with those possessing learning being more valued than those with little learning. As a result, entirely different sets expectations on high- and low-learners will be imposed on individuals in encounters. When members of categoric units are defined by their respective resources, discrimination at the level of corporate units within institutional domains has typically been operative. Those without education, jobs, and health care have often been subject to discrimination, often on the basis of their membership in other categoric units, such as their ethnicity or religious affiliation. Categoric units are thus part of the larger stratification system in which the unequal distribution of resources has led to the formation of distinctive social classes (another type of categoric unit) that may have a gender or an ethnic component when members of these categoric units are over-represented in some classes and under-represented in others.

This embedding of individuals in categoric units that, in turn, are embedded in a stratification system (within a society and, potentially, inter-societal

system) has very large effects on how individuals interact in both focused and unfocused encounters. If, for example, members of devalued categories must walk through space where members of more valued categoric units dominate, the salience of individuals' respective categoric units will be high, with the consequence their movement in space and the demeanor will be orchestrated so as to mark their categoric-unit membership. The same would be true in more focused interactions; all of the microdynamic forces in play will be influenced by how categoric-unit memberships load the valences of these forces. Thus, the degree of embedding of individuals in categoric units, the salience of categoric units in any given encounter, the degree of differential evaluation of salient categoric units, and the expectations on members of these differentially evaluated units will all have significant effects on what transpires in focused and unfocused encounters.

Embedding in categoric units and, by extension, the larger macro-level stratification system will be as critical as positions in corporate units (within institutional domains) in explaining the dynamics of all encounters. Since all individuals are members of categoric units – if only by gender/sex and age – categoric units exert an influence on all encounters, but as the complexity of societies increases, so does the diversity of categoric units in which encounters can be embedded. To some degree, incumbency in many different categoric units can reduce the power of the evaluation and expectations for any one unit, but this outcome is related to the degree of correlation among memberships in high- and low-evaluation units. The key point is that the nature of the embedding in diverse categoric units and the effects of this embedding can be theorized (Table 2.2).

As is the case with embedding in corporate units, particular properties of categoric units increase the clarity of expectations in encounters. One is the discreteness of the parameters defining the boundaries of membership in a categoric unit. In Peter Blau's terms, the more nominal is a parameter, the more is the boundary between being in or out of a categoric unit likely to be clear. Thus, gender and markers of ethnicity such as skin color (even with large variations in actual skin color) signal clear boundaries for membership in a categoric unit; and under these conditions, the expectation states for how members of categoric units are to behave will guide the flow of interaction. A second property is consensus over the evaluation of members in a categoric unit in terms of their moral worth and the ideologies and meta-ideologies that are employed to form this evaluation. When the moral worth of individuals in categoric units is clear, so are expectation states for their behaviors; and while inequalities in moral worth may be unfair and generate a certain amount of tension, these inequalities still make expectations for

Table 2.2 Properties of categoric units. Increasing clarity of expectations in encounters

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1. The discreteness of the boundaries defining membership in a categoric unit
 2. The level of consensus over the relative evaluation of categoric units (and hence, the “moral worth” of their members) and the ideologies and meta-ideologies used to form this evaluation
 3. The degree of embeddedness of categoric units in the macro-level stratification system and the (a) level of inequality of resource distribution, (b) the degree of homogeneity of classes, and (c) the linearity in rank-ordering of classes in terms of shares of resources and moral worth
 4. The homogeneity among individuals who are members of a categoric unit
 5. The degree of correlation of membership on one categoric unit with membership in other categoric units revealing similar levels of evaluation
 6. The degree of correlation of membership in categoric units with diverse positions in the divisions of labor or corporate units, particularly the vertical division of labor
 7. The degree of embedding of corporate units in which categoric unit membership is consolidated with positions in the division of labor within relatively autonomous institutional domains, and especially those domains distributing highly valued resources
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behaviors very clear. A third property is the degree of embedding of a categoric unit in the macro-level stratification system; for, the more correlated is membership with locations in the class system, the more clear-cut are evaluations of, and expectation states for, individuals in categoric units. The correlation of membership in categoric units is most likely when there are (a) high levels of inequality in resource distribution by corporate units within diverse institutional domains, (b) high degrees of homogeneity of class memberships, and (c) high levels of linearity in the rank-ordering of classes in terms of their relative resource shares and moral worth. A related, fourth property is the homogeneity among individuals in a categoric unit; the more their appearances and demeanors converge, and the more similar their shares of resources, the more explicit are evaluations of their moral worth and expectation states for their behaviors. A fifth property is the degree to which memberships in categoric units are correlated with each other. For instance, if ethnicity is correlated with class location, or if ethnicity is correlated with a nominal category created from a graduated parameter, such as years of education (e.g., poorly educated), the dual sets of expectations from different memberships reinforce each other and thus establish clear expectations, thereby making these expectations even more compelling. However, if memberships in categoric units are not correlated with each other or with locations on graduated parameters, then the effects of categoric unit membership will decline and, as a result, expectation states

will often be ambiguous because just *which* membership is salient during an encounter may be unclear.

The last two properties once again stem from embedding. One is the situation where there is a high correlation between memberships in categoric units with specific positions in the divisions of labor of corporate units, especially the vertical dimensions to the division of labor. This property only works to clarify expectations, however, when the moral evaluation correlates with high and low rank along the vertical dimensions of the division of labor. If low-esteem categoric unit members are spread across the entire division of labor, then the salience of categoric unit membership declines, and status in the division of labor will be more salient than expectation states attached to members of categoric units. In essence, status will trump diffuse status characteristics associated with categoric unit membership. Yet, if there is a high correlation between categoric unit membership and status positions in the division of labor, this association increases the salience of categoric unit membership and hence makes expectation states more explicit and powerful. If the corporate units revealing a correlation between (a) diffuse status characteristics and (b) status in the division of labor are embedded within autonomous institutional domains, then the effects of this correlation will be that much greater on the expectations for individuals in encounters. For example, if all executives in a business corporation are male and white, while all secretaries are women and line workers are disproportionately members of devalued ethnic categories, these correlations mean that money and power are unequally distributed and that those with less of these resources will be negatively evaluated by the ideology of, say, a capitalist economy where money and power are highly evaluated and denote moral worth. Encounters among these categoric units – male, female, and ethnicity marked by skin color – may have some tension associated with inequality but they will also reveal relatively clear expectation states for all parties.

In sum, then, embedding in corporate and categoric units that, in turn, are embedded in autonomous institutional domains and stratification systems revealing high inequalities constrains the options of individuals in encounters because of the moral evaluations and expectations states attached to positions in divisions of labor and to memberships in categoric units. The culture and structure of meso-level units (i.e., corporate and categoric units) and the structure and culture of macro-level structures and their cultures in which these meso units are embedded thus have large effects on how micro-dynamic processes play out. Hence, it is worth reviewing, once again, the structure of embedding that builds on the brief discussion in the last chapter and the beginning of this chapter.

The Structure of Embedding

All structural units have a culture or system of symbols regulating actions and behaviors, and it is for this reason that I label units at all levels of social reality *sociocultural* formations as a way to communicating this obvious fact of social life. Embedding at any level of social organization thus involves location at a point in the social structure of the more inclusive unit, which in turn determines the relevance of particular aspects of culture. The relative effects of structure and culture can be highly variable, but there are patterns to these effects and, hence, they are amenable to theoretical generalizations. To fully understand how embedding determines behaviors in encounters, I need to step back and provide a broader conception of sociocultural formations at the macro, meso, and micro levels of social reality. The focus of this discussion will be on how the structure and culture of the macro and meso realms influence actions and behaviors in the micro realm, but to appreciate the power of embedding, it is important to outline some of the key properties and dynamics of the macro and meso levels of social reality.

The Structure and Culture of Macro-level Social Reality

To briefly summarize the discussion above and in Chap. 1, the macro level of social reality is composed of institutional domains, stratification systems, societies, and inter-societal systems (see Fig. 1.1). Institutional domains are congeries of variously related corporate units for resolving logistical loads and selection pressures. Stratification systems revolve around the unequal distribution of the resources by corporate units within institutional domains, the formation of classes, the rank-ordering of classes on a scale of worth, and mobility of individuals and families among social classes. Societies are geopolitical units controlling and defending territories, and inter-societal systems are relations among societies, most often through corporate units in key institutional domains, especially economy, polity, and religion. At the meso level, as emphasized above, are corporate and categoric units that, respectively, are the building blocks of institutional domains and stratification systems.

Corporate units are not only the building blocks of an institutional domain, they are also embedded in this domain. Groups are nested inside of organizations which are part of an institutional domain, and hence the structure and culture of both groups and organizations will reflect this nesting. Organizational systems are located within communities, and since organizations are embedded in institutional domains, communities are also embedded in a configurations

of institutional domains – almost always, economy, polity, law, religion, education, and kinship but also sport, arts, medicine and, at times, science. The culture and structure of these configurations of institutional domains thus have large effects on the dynamics of communities. For our purposes, however, it is group and organizational corporate units that have the greatest effects on encounters because most encounters are embedded in one or both; and since groups are a part of organizations, and organizations are lodged in institutional domains, the structure and culture of institutional domains will at least indirectly influence what occurs in encounters. Institutional domains determine, to a high degree, the properties of corporate units. For example, the basic kinship system in western societies is nucleated – that is, composed of mother, father, and their children in smaller and relatively autonomous corporate units – with the consequence that kinship is composed of mostly group structures and does not reveal the embedding of nuclear units in larger organizational systems, such as lineages, clans, moieties, built up from nuclear units. Thus, encounters embedded in the kinship domain of a post-industrial society where nuclear kinship units dominate will be very different than those in a horticultural society where kinship is elaborated into organizations constructed from descent and residence rules. To take another example, economic activities and encounters among hunter-gatherers are lodged inside of kinship and band, whereas in contemporary industrial and post industrial societies, kinship and economy are differentiated from each other, with the result that the structure of economy will determine how organizational systems and groups are organized and, thereby, how encounters will proceed.

Institutional domains are embedded in societies, with the structure of a society determined by the level of differentiation among institutional domains and the mechanisms by which they are integrated (Turner 2010a). Similarly, an inter-societal system is built from relations among particular institutional domains, most typically economy and polity but, potentially, religion and kinship as well. Even though societal and inter-societal systems may seem remote from encounters, these large-scale structures determine who is present in encounters and how they are supposed to act. For instance, encounters in schools in many parts of the world are directed by not only the indigenous institutional domains of education, but the educational system may be partially embedded in a “western model” of education that has been imposed by supranational agencies, such as The World Bank or The International Monetary Fund, which have historically required (as a condition of making loans) that the system of education and the corporate-unit building blocks of this institutional domain reveal a western post-industrial profile, guided by its culture. Or an encounter among diplomats is a gathering that is clearly embedded in the respective polities of two or more societies; the same is true of trade negotiations which are embedded in the respective economies of the

potential trading partners. True, these encounters are also embedded in groups and organizations of polity and economy, but to understand the dynamics of the encounter, it is also necessary to see how the structure (and culture) of the more macro units constrains what these parties can do as they negotiate in encounters. Moreover, the mode of integration among these domains and the corporate units in them can be critical to what transpires in encounters. For instance, if power and domination by the polity of one society is the mode of integration of an inter-societal system – as has been the case through much of human history – then encounters in political and trade negotiations will be very different than if integration was achieved by market exchanges or by common cultures of the parties in encounters. These modes of integration are the subject matter of macro-level analysis and have their greatest direct impact on the structure of corporate units as these constrain encounters. Yet, at times this effect can be more direct, but even if it is mediated by the structure (and culture) of corporate units, the latter is very much constrained by the institutional domains involved in societal and inter-societal formations as well as the mechanisms by which integration among institutional domains within and between societies is achieved (see Turner 2010a: for a detailed analysis).

Encounters are also embedded in stratification systems. The types and levels of varying resources held by individuals is always critical to what transpires in an encounter. At times these resources are part of an organizational system and groups, but the nature of the resources and the pattern of resource distribution is determined by the structure and culture of broader institutional domains and the stratification system that emerges from the unequal distribution of resources to individuals in each domain. At other times, individuals meet as members of different categoric units outside of institutional domains and organizations; and what occurs in encounters will be influenced by the shares of resources and evaluations of respective worth of members in different categoric units. The more a categoric unit is embedded in the stratification system, the more salient will be categoric membership during the course of an encounter, and particularly so when members of differentially valued categoric units interact but also when members of only one type of categoric unit interact (e.g., encounters among members of one ethnic subpopulation, or members of one social class). It would not be possible to understand the interaction among individuals in these categoric units without some appreciation for the structure of the stratification system along such dimensions as the level of inequality in the distribution of various resources, the degree to which homogeneous classes exist, the degree of linear rank-ordering of classes, and the rates of mobility across class boundaries. These properties of stratification will have direct effects on encounters as well as mediated effects through the formation of categoric units.

Figure 2.1 offers a rough vision of how embedding of encounters in successive layers of macrostructures constrains the dynamics of encounters. Encounters are strips of interaction but they almost always are lodged within a social structure that imposes itself on encounters from remote macrostructural levels of social organization.

Attached to these structural units are symbol systems or culture that order cognitions, arouse emotions, and regulate the behaviors of individuals and collective actors. Later, in Fig. 2.2, I outline graphically what I see as the

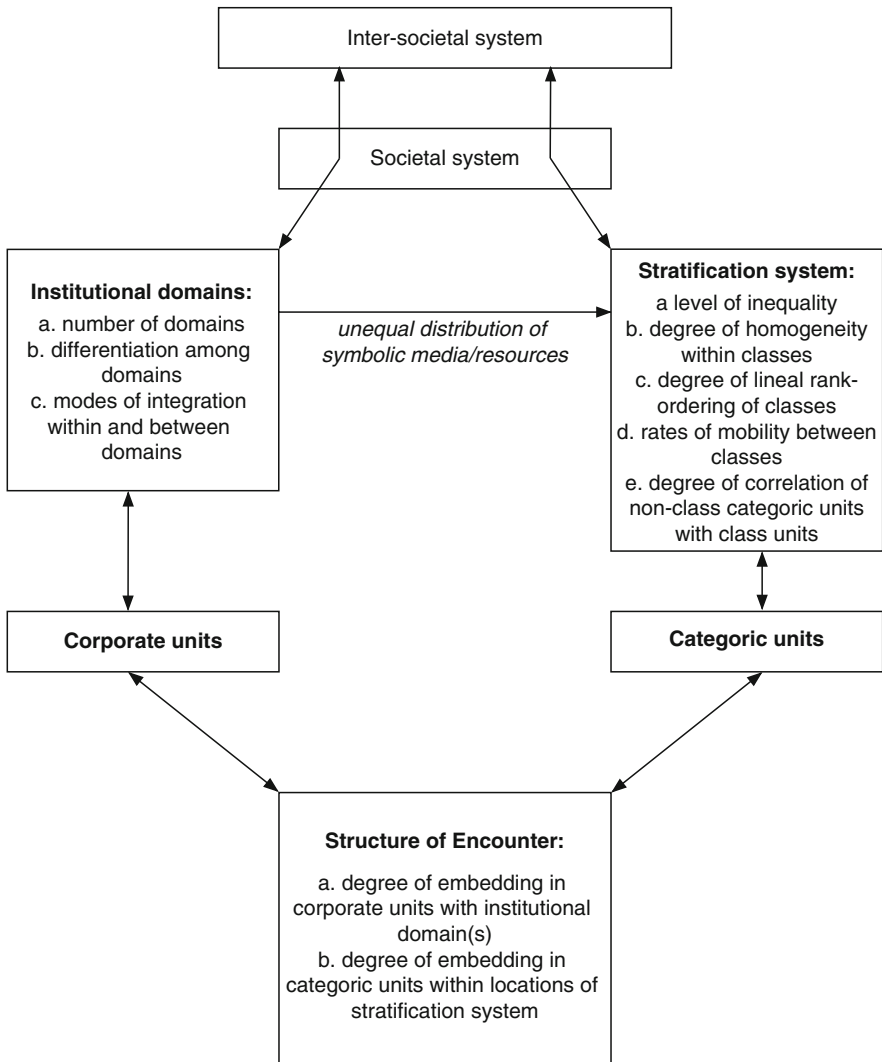


Fig. 2.1 The structure of embedding and encounters

most relevant dimensions of these cultural systems for understanding the microdynamics of focused and unfocused encounters. At the societal level of social organization (and by extension the inter-societal as well) are (a) languages that are used by actors to build all other elements of culture, (b) technologies or knowledge about how to manipulate the environment and, thereby, build up institutional domains, (c) texts (both oral and written) on the history traditions, characteristics, and life-ways of a population, (d) values or the highly general moral premises about what is right and wrong, good and bad, and (e) meta-ideologies or composites of the ideologies from each institutional domain in a society. Obviously, culture is much more robust than this simple list of categories, but for my purposes in developing a set of abstract principles on microdynamics, this attenuated conceptualization is sufficient. These societal-level elements of culture arise from institutional domains and stratification systems, but once in place, they constrain the options and actions of actors at all levels of social reality.

At the institutional level, each domain has a distinctive *generalize symbolic medium of exchange* which is employed in discourse among actors in a domain, in the articulation of themes and orientations among actors, in exchanges of resources, in the unequal distribution of resources that initiates the formation of stratification systems, and in the formation of ideologies for each domain that specify what should and ought to occur a domain. In Table 2.3, I denote what I see as the generalized symbolic medium of the most prominent institutional domains in a society. The notion of generalized symbolic media is rather under-theorized in sociology by all but a few theorists (Parsons 1963a, b; Parsons and Smelser 1956; Luhmann 1982; Turner 2010a, b, b, c), and although I have tried to extend the conceptualization of these media for macro-level social processes, I have not fully developed the idea very much beyond the efforts of others. Yet, symbolic media are critical to understanding social processes at all levels of social organization because, as noted above, they are the terms of discourse, the valued resources distributed unequally, the resources exchanged among actors within and between domains, and the basis for ideological formation as well as the construction of meta-ideologies. To illustrate, *money* is the medium of exchange within the economy (of complex societies) and between the economy and other institutional domains. For instance, family members provide loyalty (to come to work) in exchange for wages. Moreover, money is the valued resource unequally distributed by corporate units in the economy proper and corporate units in other domains where money (along with the symbolic medium unique to a domain) is distributed unequally. As money is used by actors within and between domains, it becomes the medium by which discourse about the economy (and other domains where

Table 2.3 Generalized symbolic media within institutional domains

Kinship	<i>Love/loyalty</i> , or the use of intense positive affective states to forge and mark commitments to others and groups of others
Economy	<i>Money</i> , or the denotation of exchange value for objects, actions, and services by the metrics inhering in money
Polity	<i>Power</i> , or the capacity to control the actions of other actors
Law	<i>Influence</i> , or the capacity to adjudicate social relations and render judgments about justice, fairness, and appropriateness of actions
Religion	<i>Sacredness/Piety</i> , or the commitment to beliefs about forces and entities inhabiting a non-observable supernatural realm and the propensity to explain events and conditions by references to these sacred forces and beings
Education	<i>Learning</i> , or the commitment to acquiring and passing on knowledge
Science	<i>Knowledge</i> , or the invocation of standards for gaining verified knowledge about all dimensions of the social, biotic, and physico-chemical universes
Medicine	<i>Health</i> , or the concern about and commitment to sustaining the normal functioning of the human body
Sport	<i>Competitiveness</i> , or the definition of games that produce winners and losers by virtue of the respective efforts of players
Arts	<i>Aesthetics</i> , or the commitment to make and evaluate objects and performances by standards of beauty and pleasure that they give observers

it also circulates); and out of this discourse emerge themes about the nature of the economy and what occurs in an economy (Luhmann 1982) which, in turn, are codified into an economic ideology that specifies what are right and wrong, proper and improper, and good and bad behaviors of actors within the economy. To take another example, *sacredness/piety* is the symbolic medium of the religious domain, with exchanges and discourse occurring using the premises of this symbolic medium; and from these exchanges and discourse come religious themes which are then codified into religious beliefs and ideologies about what is morally correct or incorrect behavior

by actors in the religious domain. And, to continue the example, when sacredness/piety is part of an exchange with other domains, it is exchanged for love/loyalty and money from families, money from economy, and delimited rights for authority to interpret the supernatural from polity.

In any societal system, some institutions are more dominant than others; as a result, when the ideologies of all domains are combined into a meta-ideology, the premises of these dominant institutional domains will be more prominent in the meta-ideology. This meta-ideology feeds into highly abstract value premises of a society, often changing values and, yet, at the same time being constrained by these values. Furthermore, the meta-ideology of a society is typically employed to legitimate its stratification system and to create standards of moral worth that are employed to evaluate not only class as a categoric unit but all other categoric units possessing shares of valued resources.

Values, ideologies, and meta-ideologies not only provide the moral premises for actions by individual and collective actors, they also constrain the formation of norms in corporate and categoric units. Within an institutional domain, there are broad *institutional norms* about how individuals and corporate actors are to behave; and these are constrained by the moral premises of values and meta-ideologies as well as the specific ideology of a given domain. In turn, the norms within the divisions of labor in corporate units are delimited not only by the structural properties of a corporate units but also by the ideologies of a domain and the values as well as meta-ideologies of the more inclusive society and, at times, inter-societal system. Within the stratification system, there are moral premises provided by values, meta-ideologies, and specific institutional ideologies that legitimate the stratification system as a whole while, at the same time, constraining the formation of normative expectations for individuals and corporate units like families at each differentiated point in the stratification system. And, if categoric units, such as ethnicity and religious affiliation, are also correlated with locations in the stratification system, the expectations for behaviors of individuals in these categoric units will also be heavily infused with the moral premises of the stratification system. For example, if particular categories of persons, such as members of an ethnic subpopulation, are over-represented in the lower social classes of the stratification system, expectations for their behaviors will not only follow from their ethnic heritage but be heavily weighted toward devaluation of their moral worth because of their position in the class structure of a society. Thus, in a capitalist, market-driven society, members of ethnic populations over-represented in the lower classes of the society will be perceived to have “not worked hard enough” to secure learning resources (from education) that could be used to gain access to corporate units distributing such valued

resources as money and authority. The normative expectations on members of categoric units (or expectation states for diffuse status characteristics) are, then, almost always constrained by the moral codes that have been used to justify inequality and stratification.

The Structure and Culture of Meso-level Reality

Encounters are generally embedded in corporate units, typically groups and organizations but also communities. Corporate units determine the organization of physical space – offices, buildings, walkways, streets, parks, and other dimensions of ecology – that constrain what can occur in both focused and unfocused encounters. This ecological constraint, coupled with divisions of labor, also determines interpersonal demography: the number of individuals co-present, their density of arrangement, the positions they hold in relevant corporate units, and the distribution of members in various categoric units. Along with the ecology and division of labor of corporate units, categoric units determine how many persons in which categories are co-present and, most importantly, the salience or relevance of categoric unit membership for focused and unfocused encounters. The differentiation of distinctive categoric units is related to universal categories, such as gender, age and “race” (or people’s perceptions of race), to differences created by cultural backgrounds such as religious affiliation and ethnicity, and to locations in the stratification system. As noted above, the more any categoric distinction is correlated with membership in a specific class location (another type of categoric unit), the more salient will categoric unit membership become in focused and unfocused encounters. Moreover, when categoric-unit membership is correlated with positions in divisions of labor in corporate units, and particularly with positions in the hierarchical division of labor of organizations and with neighborhoods in communities, the salience of membership increases for all encounters, and especially for encounters among members of differentially evaluated social categories. Thus, embedding in corporate and categoric units constrains the dynamics of both focused and unfocused encounters; and in so doing, embedding makes it much easier to develop theoretical principles on these dynamics.

As cultural codes move from the societal and even inter-societal system levels to the institutional and stratification system level, and then, down to meso-level corporate and categoric units, they become ever-more restrictive on actors as they impose expectations for behaviors in encounters. The layering of culture across different levels of social structure, and the successive

embedding of situational expectations gives culture more power. Thus, as situational norms in encounters are embedded in the norms of corporate units, as these norms are nested in beliefs about status in divisions of labor and about categoric-unit memberships, as these status beliefs are lodged inside of ideologies of institutional domains, as these ideologies are consolidated into meta-ideologies across diverse institutional domains and the stratification system, and as all of these cultural layers reflect generalized value premises, the power of culture increases and imposes constraints on how individuals normatize the encounter. It is this movement from abstract moral premises to ever more specific prescriptions and proscriptions that puts teeth into culture and forces individuals to pay attention to its demands in all encounters. Let me briefly elaborate on these properties and dynamics of cultural embedding.

Corporate units are built up within institutional domains to resolve selection pressures from the logistical loads created by macrodynamic forces. As they evolve, distinctive generalized symbolic media emerge for discourse leading to what Niklas Luhmann (1982) termed *thematicization* or general orientations within an institutional domain and, eventually, to ideological formation about what should and should not occur within an institutional domain. As ideologies form, they constrain the range of general institutional norms that can emerge in a domain; and in turn, these institutional norms carry the power of ideologies and the use of symbolic media down to the corporate unit level, thereby constraining the normative culture attached to the divisions of labor in corporate units.

Categoric units are the outcome of differences in the biology, culture, and organization of individuals within a society, but as I have emphasized, they are also formed through the unequal distribution of resources in corporate units within domains. This inequality can create categoric units, such as a ranked series of social classes, and it can also add further points of distinctiveness to categoric units formed by other parameters (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation) to the extent that categoric unit and social class membership are correlated or consolidated (that is, members of categoric units are over-represented in class categories in the stratification system). The meta-ideologies legitimating the stratification system as a whole generate moral evaluations of categoric units on a scale of “worth” which takes on greater clarity and linearity when the correlation of categoric units with class position within the stratification system is high. This evaluation is also directly influenced by the evaluative tenets contained in all generalized symbolic media of institutional domains and the ideologies that these media generate within domains. Similarly, institutional norms will also have effects on the expectation states for members of categoric units and, reciprocally,

these expectation states can influence the substance of institutional norms when members of categoric units are habitually confined (by discrimination) to only certain domains (or, conversely, excluded from some domains) and to a delimited set of positions in the corporate units in those domains where access is possible.

The expectations on members of categoric units arise from a complex of cultural systems operating at diverse levels of social reality. At the core of these expectations is a general evaluation of worth that can become codified into society-wide (and even inter-societal) beliefs about the characteristics, qualities, and capacities of members of categoric units (Ridgeway 1998, 2001, 2008). Thus, general evaluations of worth cause the formation of what expectation-states theorizing terms *status beliefs* about individuals who evidence *diffuse status characteristics* (e.g., gender, ethnicity, age or in my terms parameters marking categoric-unit memberships). What makes these diffuse status characteristics (or categoric unit memberships) unique is that individuals carry them from situation to situation; they are often not confined to a particular corporate unit, but to positions in all corporate units, to all unfocused encounters in public places, and to all focused encounters at any location in the social universe. These beliefs and expectation states contained in these beliefs are translated into norms for individuals at the meso level of social reality. These norms for categoric unit members often influence the norms in the division of labor of corporate units, especially when that categoric unit membership is highly salient. Categoric unit membership increases in salience when locations in the division of labor of corporate, particularly the hierarchical divisions of labor, are correlated with categoric unit membership, whereas the salience of categoric unit membership declines when the correlation of membership with positions in the divisions of labor of organizational corporate units or locations in community corporate units is low. Under conditions of high salience, then, expectation states for categoric units become codified in the norms of corporate units; conversely, when categoric unit salience is low, the norms specifying specific tasks in the division of labor of corporate units trump those that arise from status beliefs about members of categoric units.

The Structure and Culture of Micro-level Reality

As promised earlier, Fig. 2.2 offers a rough picture of layers of culture from the macro through meso realms of social reality that impinge upon the

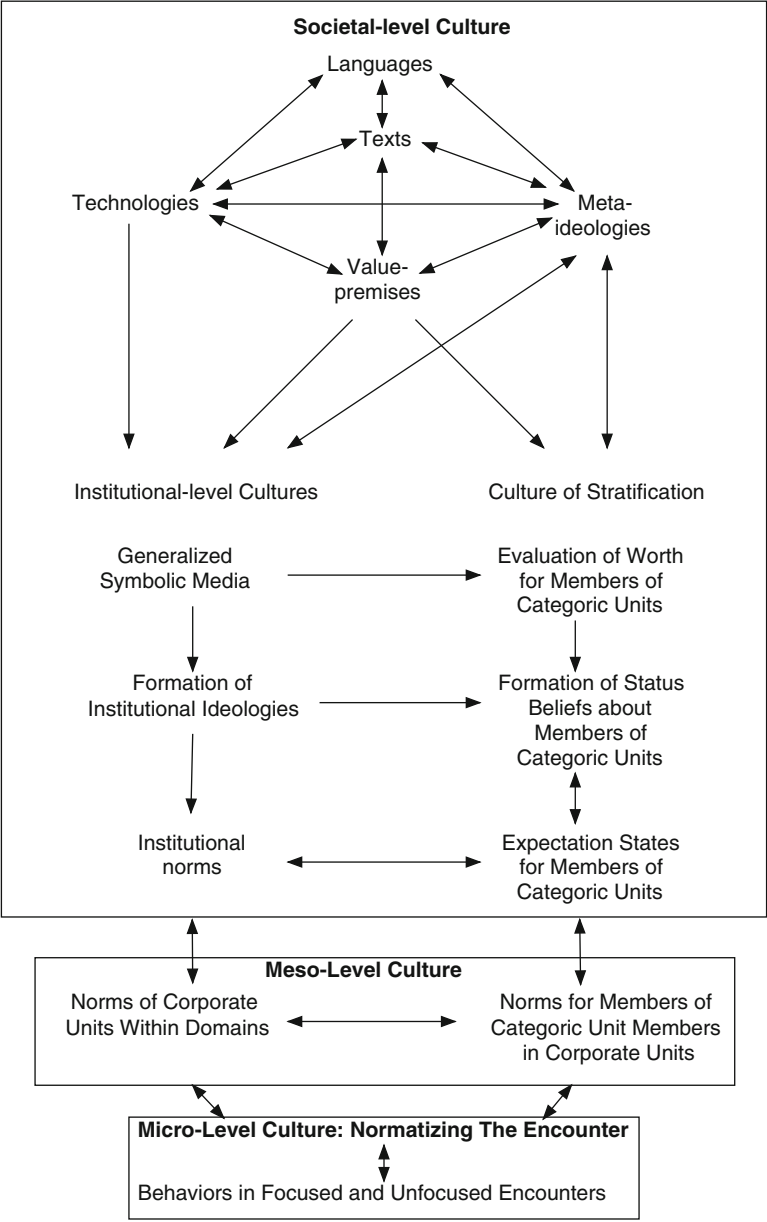


Fig. 2.2 The culture of embedding for all encounters

normalization of encounters. The details of Fig. 2.2 are less important than the imagery of how macro- and meso-level culture forms, as is indicated by the one- and two-way arrows. The one-way arrows are only intended to denote an important causal effect of a cultural element on another. A two-way arrow simply emphasizes a reverse causal effect, as is the case when ideologies evolve within institutional domains and become part of a larger meta-ideology which then constrains subsequent ideological formation with institutional domain, or as is evident with meta-ideologies that are constrained by value premises that, reciprocally, are altered as new ideologies are added to the mix of a meta-ideology.

Technologies constrain the formation of institutional domains and the corporate units from which they are constructed, and in so doing, they also influence the culture of a domain. As a unique generalized symbolic medium emerges within a domain, this medium is used to form ideologies that, in turn, constrain the formation of institution-specific institutional norms, with the latter constraining the norms of meso-level corporate units operating within this domain. Symbolic media and the ideologies that they generate determine the evaluations of, and the status beliefs about, members of categoric units within the stratification system which, along with institutional norms, set up expectation states for members of categoric units (or, *status beliefs* about those exhibiting *diffuse status characteristics*). These become codified into normative expectations for individuals in categoric units. And, together, the norms of corporate units within domains and the norms of categoric units structure the formation of micro-level culture, particularly the process of normalization briefly reviewed in Chap. 1 and examined in more detail in Chap. 3. And normalization imposes high levels of constraint on the behaviors of individuals in focused and unfocused encounters.

Let me emphasize that Figs. 2.1 and 2.2 only outline general properties of the social universe that are important for theorizing. The outlines in the figures do not constitute theory, but only a sense for the terrain to be covered by theorizing. Some of this terrain needs distinctive theories of the macro and meso realms of social reality and, thus, are not our concern here where emphasis is on the micro realm. Yet, embedding is critical to understanding the dynamics of this micro realm because meso and macro socio-cultural formations constrain the dynamics of encounters directly and indirectly by loading the values and valences for the forces driving the micro realm of focused and unfocused encounters. It is for this reason that I begin analysis of encounters with a conceptual scheme that maps some of the key causal connections among the micro, meso, and macro levels of reality. These will all need to be refined and stated as elementary principles in the chapters to follow.

Elementary Principles of Embedding of Encounters

I will introduce the dynamics of embedding at many points in the next chapters, but we are now in a position to offer an elementary, though complex, principle on embedding, *per se*. This principle will allow us to anticipate other principle on microdynamics because embedding must be the center of any theory of encounters. Virtually every focused or unfocused encounter is lodged in corporate or categoric units, and generally both. As a result, macro-structures and cultures are instantiated in micro-level through embedding. The *interaction order*, as Erving Goffman (1983) emphasized in the posthumous publication of his never-delivered presidential address to the American Sociological Association, is part of a larger a *social occasion* that brings more macro-level phenomena to micro-level encounter. Goffman was on the right track but he never developed a very adequate conception of the properties and dynamics of the meso and macro social orders; indeed, sociologists have struggled with this issue since sociology's inception, and my emphasis on embedding here and in subsequent chapters represents my best effort to connect the encounter to larger-scale social orders (see also Lawler et al. 2009) for a recent and important effect to address the dynamics of embedding). Thus, the fourth principle of microdynamics can be stated as follows

4. The more an encounter is embedded in corporate and categoric units, and the more these units are, respectively, embedded in relatively autonomous institutional domains and in class locations in the stratification system of a society or inter-societal system, the more readily will participants in the encounter be able to interpret the meaning of the ecology and demography of the situation, to determine each other's relative status, to role-make and role-take successfully, to normatize the situation from their stocks of knowledge about the culture of corporate and categoric units, to determine how to meet universal motive- or need-states, and to display and feel the appropriate emotions; and conversely, the less embedded is an encounter in corporate and categoric units and, by extension, macro-level sociocultural formations, the more ambiguous are expectations likely to be and, hence, the more effort individuals will expend in determining the meaning of situational ecology and demography, the respective status and roles of participants, the relevant norms of the situation, the means for meeting motive-states, and the appropriate emotions to be felt and displayed.
 - A. The more an encounter is embedded in a corporate unit, the greater will be the effects of embedding, with these effects increasing with
 1. Visible boundaries marking a corporate unit off from its environment
 2. Clear entrance and exit rules for entering and leaving the corporate unit

3. Explicitness of goals organizing the division of labor
 4. Explicitness of both the horizontal and vertical divisions of labor
 5. Formality of the culture and structure of the corporate unit and its division of labor
 6. Degree of correlation of positions in the division of labor with memberships in nominal categoric units, especially correlations with the vertical division of labor
 7. Level of autonomy of the institutional domain in which a corporate unit is embedded
 8. Level of consistency among generalized symbolic media, ideologies, and norms governing an institutional domain and the corporate units in this domain
- B. The more an encounter is embedded in categoric units defined by nominal parameters or by graduated parameters that are converted into quasi-nominal categories, the greater are the effects of embedding on microdynamic processes, with these effects increasing with
1. Discreteness of the parameters defining the boundaries of categoric unit membership
 2. Consensus over the relative evaluation of members of categoric units and the ideologies and meta-ideologies used to form this evaluation
 3. Correlation of memberships in categoric units with class locations within the stratification system, with this correlation increasing with
 - a. The degree of inequality of resource distribution by corporate units
 - b. The degree of intra-class homogeneity
 - c. The degree of linearity in the ranking of classes on a scale of moral worth
 - d. The degree to which inter-class mobility is restricted
 4. Correlation of memberships in categoric units with positions in the divisions of labor, especially the vertical division of labor, in diverse corporate units across a wide range of institutional domains
 5. Degree of homogeneity among members in diverse categoric units
 6. Degree of salience of categoric unit memberships in general, with this general salience being an additive function of the conditions listed above
- C. The less an encounter is embedded in categoric units and/or categoric units are of low salience, the greater will be the effects of
1. Status in the divisions of labor of corporate units on all microdynamic processes in focused encounters
 2. Ecology and demography in unfocused encounters

- D. The less are encounters embedded in the divisions of labor of corporate units, the greater will be the effects of memberships in differentially evaluated categoric units on all microdynamic processes in both focused and unfocused encounters

This long but still relatively simple principle summarizes the thrust of my argument in this chapter. Let me recapitulate by commenting on the elements of this principle, especially since these effects of embedding are critical to understanding microdynamic processes. The initial portion of Principle 4 simply emphasizes that with embedding of an encounter in meso structures and their cultures, the range of options for individuals in encounters is reduced. Corporate units reveal divisions of labor around status positions, roles, and norms that influence how individuals will interpret the ecology and demography of the situation, how they will respond to status differences or similarities, how they will role-make and role-take, how they will normalize the situation, how they will go about meeting transactional needs, and how they will display emotions. Categoric units are almost always differentially valued, thereby setting up expectations for the relative worth of individuals and, hence, for their behaviors. When encounters are *not* embedded in these meso structures and the cultures that they bring to bear on an encounter, both focused and unfocused encounters will require considerably more work to remain viable as individuals try to figure out what ecology and demography mean, what the respective statuses of individuals are, what roles are being made by others and what roles can be made by person, what norms are relevant, what transactional needs can be realized to what degree, and what emotions can be expressed.

This kind of ambiguity is reduced with embedding in meso structures and cultures, and the ambiguity is reduced even more when meso structures are, in turn, embedded in macro-level structures, particularly (1) an institutional domain revealing a coherent culture built up from the use of the generalized symbolic medium to forge discourse and talk, to develop themes and orientations, to exchange valued resources, to formulate ideologies, and to articulate broad institutional norms and (2) a stratification system that establishes the resource shares distributed by corporate units in domains to individuals and the relative worth of individuals on the basis of these shares (as specified in the ideologies of all resource-giving domains and the composites, meta-ideology legitimating the stratification system as a whole). Categoric unit memberships can exert even more power on encounters when there is a high correlation of membership not only with locations in the class system but also the divisions of labor of diverse corporate units across a wide variety of institutional domains. In essence, there is a compounding of the effects of class and divisions of labor with parameters marking a categoric unit

when members of diverse categoric units are over-represented in some class locations and in low or high positions in the divisions of labor of diverse types of corporate units in a wide range of different institutional domains. For example, it African-origin individuals are over-represented in the lower classes and in low-level positions in corporate units in all domains (economic, political, religious, educational, medical, legal, scientific, etc.) or are denied access to corporate units in some domains (e.g., economy, polity, education, and medicine), this consolidation of membership of categoric units with locations in the stratification system and with access to, or locations in, corporate units in resource-giving institutional domains reinforces expectation states for members of categoric units. This consolidation also increases the salience of membership in categoric units, thereby, individuals' perceptions of each other, but as I emphasize in 4-B (6), salience can be high in general among members of a society, somewhat independently of the correlation of membership with class locations and/or positions in the divisions of labor of corporate units within institutional domains.

Finally, encounters may not be embedded in categoric units, or if they are, they are embedded in categoric units that carry low salience (as would be the case when there was a low correlation of memberships in a categoric unit with class location or positions in divisions of labor). That is, categoric-unit memberships are, in Peter Blau's (1977, 1993) words, *unconsolidated* with corporate units or inequalities; instead, there is an *intersection* and penetration of categoric unit members in all classes and across all types of corporate units in all institutional domains. Under such conditions, the effects of categoric unit membership decline, while the effects of status, per se, in the division of labor of corporate units increase, especially when status is structured hierarchically. If, however, an encounter is *not* embedded in the divisions of labor of a corporate unit, then the diffuse status characteristics or categoric unit memberships of individuals (say, by gender, age, ethnicity) will increase in salience and structure more of the flow of interaction in both focused and unfocused encounters.

Conclusion

Thus, embedding is central to a theory of microdynamics, so much so that I have sequenced the next chapters on microdynamic forces in rough order of the effects of embedding. I begin with demographic and ecological forces in Chap. 3 because these are determined by the embedding of encounters in corporate and categoric units. Next is Chap. 4 on status forces, which can

only be understood by their embedding in corporate and categoric units. Chapter 5 on role forces recognizes that roles are often attached to status and, thus, indirectly constrained by the embedding of status, but as we will see, roles are more than adjuncts to status. They reveal dynamics of their own that are often follow from embedding in meso and macro level culture. Chapter 6 addresses symbolic or cultural forces which are very much delimited by embedding in social structures at the meso and macro levels of social reality, especially as this embedding influences status and role forces. Chapter 7 on motivational need-states or what I term *transactional forces* are circumscribed by embedding in meso and macro sociocultural formations, but they are also determined by the nature of humans as beings and will always be operative when humans interact, even in encounters that are not embedded in meso or macro structures and their cultures. Chapter 8 completes the review of microdynamic forces and addresses human emotions, which as I argue are as unique to humans as is their capacity for language and culture. Humans are always emotional wherever they are; and while embedding in social structures and culture often determines the emotions experienced by persons and the intensity of these emotions, emotions are aroused by the other microdynamic forces and, as we will see, are critical to sustaining commitments to the larger social order and to changing this order. In Chap. 9, I will address how embedding also provides conduits for change emanating from microdynamics. While these dynamics are constrained by embedding, and the more macrodynamics forces that creates macro-and meso-level social reality, social change often is a “bottom up” process. What people experience and feel at the micro level of the encounter can, over time, generate pressures for change of meso-level structures and, eventually macro social reality. Thus, we will need to correct for the clear impression given in this chapter that micro social life is so highly constrained by embedding that the dynamics operating at this micro level have no power to change the social universe. As we will see, such is not the case. Finally in Chap. 10, I will summarize the (numbered) abstract principles of macrodynamics that now has reached four in this chapter and will reach – as each chapter on microdynamic forces is developed. These principles constitute what I see as an elementary theory of the micro realm of social reality, and together with similar sets of elementary principles on the dynamics of the meso and macro realms of social reality, constitute a theory of *all* social reality – imperfect and perhaps wrong in many places but, nonetheless, a general or grand theory for sociological analysis of the social universe.

As formal principles, it is clear what is being asserted; it is possible to test them with a wide variety of research methods; and most importantly, it is possible to explain an entire domain of the social universe. And, if the

principles are found to be inadequate, then the burden of proof shifts to the critic to develop better principles that can only make sociology a more mature science. As I noted in Chap. 1, I reject as irrelevant the very idea that scientific theory cannot be developed in sociology – an idea so common these days in sociology that it is almost depressing to be a scientist in such a discipline. This rejection of science takes sociology nowhere; our goal is to explain how the social world operates. This book represents my best effort to do so for the micro realm (see Turner 1995, 2003, 2010c, for efforts for similar efforts for the macro realm), and I welcome constructive criticism that seeks to articulate better theoretical principles.