“The Institutional Construction of the Self”

A. Announcements:
http://www.soc.ucsb.edu/faculty/mohr/classes/soc1/

Readings available tomorrow PM for next week

First writing assignment due next Wed at 6:00 PM

Adds/Drops through GOLD

My Section (negotiating, don’t drop other section yet)
The Institutional Construction of the Self

B. Individual Centered vs. Institutional Centered Approaches.


2. Easier to get Individual Centered because it is the dominant ideology and cultural logic of our culture.
3. Institutional Perspective fundamental for sociology as a project.

4. In the end — both (dual) — but need to understand each before you can understand both.
The Institutional Construction of the Self

C. If the self varies — what varies?

- Basic commonalities (universals)
- pain, pleasure, immediacy of attention
- life/death, self-preservation
- cognitive structure
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C. If the self varies — what varies?

- Ideas vary
- (but) Ideas are linked w/ the physical
- Ideas of our selves (as selves)
- sense of ourselves as beings w/ inner depths, that we are ‘selves’
C. If the self varies — what varies?

- Useful as a way in to sociology
- What makes social science different than natural sciences:

Human existence is fundamentally conditioned by our understanding of our existence
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• French Anthropologist (student/nephew) of Emile Durkheim
• Looks at differing concept of the person (or the self (moi))
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D. Marcel Mauss.

- "Individuation" always exists

“In no way do I maintain that there has ever been a tribe, a language, in which the term “I”, “me” has never existed, or that it has not expressed something clearly represented...there has never existed a human being who has not been aware, not only of his body...his individuality, both spiritual & physical.”
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D. Marcel Mauss.

- Zuni (Pueblo Indians)
- Limited # forenames / clan
- An exact role each on the “cast-list” of the clan, expressed by that name
- each name assd. w/ animal totem
- right leg of animal, or left foot
- each has moral, hierarchical value
- never greet as brother, always “elder brother” (etc.) reflect ranking
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D. Marcel Mauss.

- Clan = certain # persons
- Each is to act out the prefigured totality of the clan
- Each acts out not just individuals responsibility, but cosmological meaning of the clan, the totem, etc.
- The “person” totally absorbed into identity vis-a-vis clan
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D. Marcel Mauss.

- What is at stake — very existence of the clan, the animal totem, all ancestors reincarnated in rightful successors (same forename)
- Role takes precedence over the self
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D. Marcel Mauss.

• Romans — The person as citizen
• the person more than organizational fact, or a right to assume a role
• Instead, a basic fact of law
“personae”
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D. Marcel Mauss.

- Romans — Earlier organized as clans w/ totems (Romulus/Remus)
- A revolution by plebs was decisive
- All freeman of Rome were citizens (not slaves)
- equal rights before laws
- New logic of naming emerges
- Relation to ancestors changes, as reflecting images and ideals
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- Christians (personne)
- from persona (“a man clad in a condition”) to personne (the human “person”)
- Moral complexity of achievement organized around complex dualism of selfhood
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• Dualism of Self
  Soul/Body
  Sin/Grace
  Life/Death

• An internal Calculus of Action
  Free Will
  Predestination
  Body as Eternal
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D. Marcel Mauss.

• From the Person to the Self (Psychological Being)
• Enlightenment Philosophies broke from giveness of the soul, to the free calculus of the cognitive, calculating individual. Mind/body dualism
• Declaration of the Rights of Man (1789)
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1. The Revolution of Martin Luther (1517)
   - “The Calling”
   - Against the Religious Elite (Catholics)
   - Personal Relationship w/ God
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2. John Calvin (Geneva, 1540’s)
   - Against “Moral Bank Account”
   - Predestination (creates anxiety)
   - The “Chosen”
   - A “Godly Life”
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3. Traditional vs. Rational Capitalism

• Puritan Ethic (honesty, deny pleasures of the flesh, long, hard work)
• Benjamin Franklin
• “A penny Saved if a Penny earned”
• “Waste not want not”
• “Time is Money”
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1. The individual is *logically prior* to society.

2. The individual is a *rational*, calculating person, who knows his or her needs (desires, wishes) and acts in such a way as to rationally maximize the fulfillment of those desires.
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3. Society is the result of a social contract, entered into (implicitly) by all the members of the society.

4. Society has no legitimate right to infringe upon the natural civil liberties of the individual.
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5. Social institutions consist of the accumulated aggregate outcome of all the rational choices made by all the individuals that are members of that society.