

AWARENESS STRUCTURES: CONCEPTUALIZING ALIENATION/SOLIDARITY¹

T. J. Scheff

Abstract: This paper seeks to define alienation and solidarity as concepts: terms that have a single, clear, and researchable meaning. To simplify the task, the analysis is limited to co-orientation toward verbal propositions, and only those where there can be agreement to disagree. For this purpose, Goffman's recursive definition of co-presence in terms of levels of awareness is extended to apply to both individuals and groups. **Solidarity is defined as mutual agreement/disagreement perceived by two parties, and that mutual perception is perceived. Degree of alienation can be based on the number of errors of perception: partial alienation involves only one error, complete alienation, four (all possible perception errors).** These definitions may be useful for empirical research on attunement and on love at the interpersonal level. At the collective level, they may be used to study the structure of context, consensus, and social facts.

As is the case with all basic ideas in social/behavioral science (Blumer 1969), solidarity and alienation are not concepts in the sense that they have been defined with single, clear meanings. The term solidarity was used casually and without definition by Marx and by Durkheim, and subsequently. For example, although they don't use the term in this respect, Berger and Luckmann (1966 pp. 22-23) discussed what they called the intersubjective world in terms of shared consciousness of commonsense knowledge. Their discussion implies solidarity of beliefs, a world that is assumed by virtually everyone in a society. This world, they say, is not acknowledged, but taken completely for granted. Yet Berger and Luckmann do not go on to attempt to spell out the structure of such an intersubjective world, nor has anyone else.

On the basis of his analysis of items in standardized alienation scales, Seeman (1975) pointed out that these scales produce highly ambiguous results, since they confound at least six different components:

1. Powerlessness
2. Meaninglessness
3. Normlessness
4. Cultural estrangement
5. Self-estrangement
6. Social isolation: exclusion or rejection.

Some of these meanings are dispositional (self-estrangement), others relational (social isolation). Still others are cognitive (meaninglessness), and others may have an emotional component (powerlessness may involve a feeling of inadequacy or shame). This

¹ This paper extends an earlier one on concepts (Scheff 2006a). The passages in **boldface** represent five versions of the main thesis: in the title, abstract, introduction, text, and conclusion. I am indebted to Noah Friedkin, David Fearon, Suzanne Retzinger and Michael Weinreich for help with this paper.

comment on Seeman's findings suggests that there are more than six confounds, because some of his components may be further divided. Alienation scales mix apples, oranges and sealing wax.

Confounds of this type can negate each other. With respect to another non-concept, it now seems possible that one of many possible reasons self-esteem scales fail to predict behavior is because cognitive (self-evaluation) and emotional (self-feelings) components tend to cancel each other. High self-evaluation (egotism) may be used to cover feelings of inadequacy or worthlessness (shame).

The self-esteem literature has recently featured agonizing discussions of the possibility that high self-esteem may lead to aggression or violence (Baumeister, et al, 1996). Our (Scheff and Fearon 2000) suggestion that defensive self-evaluation may be negatively correlated with self-feeling seems to have gone unnoticed. The same can be said for the more general issue of attempting to construct scales that measure only a single dimension. Sophisticated treatments of this issue (Rausch 1980; Bond and Fox 2001) have attracted little notice in the vast expanse of studies that are based on scales.

Heinz (1992) has criticized alienation studies for confounding individual and relational elements, but doesn't note the emotion/cognition confounds. Similarly, Gergen (1996) proposed giving more emphasis to the relational aspect of alienation, in line with his more general interest in bringing relational elements into individual psychology. However, like Heinz, he doesn't mention emotion. Studies using alienation scales continue, as if not aware of these criticisms. The inability of these scales to predict a substantial part of any kind of behavior, the most important test of validity, is probably caused at least in part by this flaw.

How might a concept of alienation be developed, in the sense of a term that has only one meaning? Perhaps some of Goffman's work might be applied to this problem, although he never referred to alienation or its opposite, solidarity. **His definition of co-presence involving three levels of mutual awareness, if modified and extended, might form a basis for defining solidarity and alienation as types of awareness structures.** There are probably many other paths as well, but this paper will follow just this one, if only to encourage further discussion of a vast problem.

Goffman on Mutual Awareness

Goffman was notorious for inventing new and undefined terms that he then abandoned. Yet a close reading of his work suggests that he did have at least one continuing interest. Like the literatures referred to below, he used many different terms, among them mystic union, the understanding required by a state of talk, joint focus of attention, mutual awareness, and the last of the line, co-presence. This paper proposes that Goffman's definition of this last term can be used to develop a concept for attunement at the interpersonal level, and social solidarity at the group level.

It is possible that the degree of mutual awareness is the basis of social integration, i.e. solidarity in the solidarity/alienation typology, a key idea in theories of social structure

and process. Most social theory, beginning with Marx (Tucker 1978), implies that social integration, together with power/hierarchy, are the two main components of social systems.

Goffman was not alone in using many different terms to refer to what seems to be the same phenomenon. There are large literatures on what seems to be the same idea in philosophy (e.g., intersubjectivity), sociology (e.g., role-taking, shared awareness), psychiatry (e.g. Attunement), psychology (e.g. mind-reading, social cognition, etc) and more recently, economics (mutual knowledge). All of these literatures concern the ability of human beings to become as one, both cognitively and emotionally, at least for short periods of time.

For example, in current discussions in economics, the phrase “common ground,” a physical metaphor, is sometimes used. There is by now a considerable literature on this issue under the rubric “mutual knowledge” (Clark and Marshall 1981; Clark and Brennan 1996; Sperber and Wilson 1995). They all worry about the infinite regression, an unending cascade of mutual mind reading: I know that you know that I know.... As Goffman implied, however, the number of recursive levels of mutual awareness is likely to be an empirical problem, not a conceptual one.

It is true that Goffman casually used metaphors for mutual awareness, such as the phrase “mystic union.” However, Goffman also used various terms that refer to awareness structures more directly. Perhaps the least satisfactory is his elaborate and complex definition of “being in a state of talk.” Because this definition involves most of an entire page of text, I will not repeat it all here. Suffice to say that it contains terms that imply mutual awareness: “...An understanding will prevail [among the speakers] as to how long and how frequently each speaker is to hold the floor...” (1967, 35; a similar formulation occurs earlier, on p. 34).

A definition that comes closer to explicitly describing intersubjective accord:

“...A single focus of thought and attention, and a single flow of talk, tends to be maintained and to be legitimated as officially representative of the encounter (Goffman 1967, 34, emphasis added).”

The significance of the phrase “a single focus of thought and attention” becomes more apparent if it is compared to a similar phrase, “joint attention” used by the psychologist Bruner (1983), when he is explaining how an infant learns to become attuned with its caretaker. The mother, he says, is only trying to teach a new word. She places an object (such as a doll) in her own and the baby’s line of gaze, shakes it to make sure of the baby’s attention, saying “See the pretty DOLLY.” In this situation, the baby may learn not only the meaning of a word, but also, since both parties are looking at the same object, how to have, jointly with the mother “a single focus of thought and attention,” to use Goffman’s phrase.

Goffman’s final attempt to conceptualize mutual awareness occurred in his last, posthumous publication. His definition of what he called “co-presence” suggests a new approach to defining attunement:

When in each other's presence individuals are admirably placed to share a joint focus of attention (1), perceive that they do so (2), and perceive this perceiving (3) [Goffman 1983, p. 3. *Numbers added*].

This definition points to three levels of mutual awareness: 1. Joint attention (agreement/disagreement), 2. Mutual perception of joint attention, and 3. Mutual perception of the mutual perception.

One limitation of his definition is that it only individuals at the interpersonal level, that is, social interaction. It is possible, however, that the idea can be applied to larger groups as well. By implication, Goffman's model of mutual awareness is recursive: I know that you know that I know, etc. Such a recursive model can be used to provide a single clear meaning to the otherwise ambiguous concepts of attunement between individuals, and of solidarity between an individual and a group, or between groups.

By the same token, Goffman's approach could also lead to a clear definition of alienation, the opposite of solidarity. Degrees of alienation might be defined in terms of a typology that would involve types of understanding/misunderstanding at the two levels of mutual perception. Complex though it would be, this idea might provide definitions that have a single meaning, and that can be applied to empirical research.

Imagination and Reality

Before pursuing some of the implications of Goffman's definition of co-presence, it will be necessary to note its relationship to other symbolic interaction treatments of mutual awareness, particularly the formulations by Cooley and Mead.

Cooley proposed that the self is social, that we 'live in the minds of others without knowing it.' He went on to say that living in the minds of others, imaginatively, gives rise to real emotions, pride and shame. Cooley called the link between the imagined view of others and real emotions "the looking glass self." Although he didn't cite the looking glass self, much of Goffman's work is an extension of Cooley's idea (Scheff 2006, Chapter 3). Goffman's conception of "impression management," for example, is an expansion of the looking glass self idea, enlivened by a host of colorful examples. One attempts to manage one's image in the eyes of others in order to avoid shame and embarrassment.

Impression management is not part of Cooley's formulation (1922), which involves a progression through 3 steps:

"A self-idea of this sort seems to have three principal elements: [1] the imagination of our appearance to the other person; [2] the imagination of his [sic] judgment of that appearance, and [3] some sort of self-feeling, such as pride or mortification" (shame; p. 184; numbers added for emphasis).

Cooley seems to suggest that we passively accept whatever pride or shame that comes our way. Goffman added two additional steps. The first may occur anywhere in the process, even before it begins: we attempt to manage the impression that we make on others, to gain pride or avoid embarrassment/shame. The last step Goffman added, by implication, occurs at the end of the process: if we are unable to avoid embarrassment, we then attempt to manage it internally. It is ironic that in this step, Goffman, who sought to avoid psychological

formulations, implies defending against painful emotions. Goffman provided many examples to illustrate his two additional steps in various situations.

Goffman's treatment of impression management can be seen as implying a basic narrowness in Cooley's formulation of the looking glass self: it is strictly an internal process and it is very brief. It is social in a narrow sense, since it involves only an imagined social reality. Cooley's actors are lost in their own movie. In the real world, imagination can be tested with reality. Cooley's formulation is also narrow in another sense: it concerns only very brief moments of time. His conception of the process that he called the looking glass self is microscopic, being only a moment in the life of a single individual.

Mead's attempt to solve the problem of connecting the internal world of actors with the external social world was crude. He simply assumed that the actor's perception of the social world was accurate. The successful nature of many social transactions suggests that there are often grounds for his assumption. There are relatively few collisions in automobile traffic because most drivers accurately take the role of other drivers. Lending agencies like banks, to survive, must accurately take the role of most of their customers concerning their ability and willingness to repay.

However, by assuming complete solidarity, Mead's scheme omits all elements of alienation in modern societies. Goffman's vision of the savage infighting that takes place in social interaction can be read as a demurrer to Mead's theory. Cooley's approach, on the other hand, stands at the opposite pole from Mead. Cooley assumes, or at least implies, momentary alienation as against Mead's continuous solidarity. Both formulations are highly specialized and therefore narrow in scope.

It is true that some of Goffman's situations seem Cooleyian, concerned only with a few seconds of internal events in one person. Since the example of Goffman in his Cooley mode that will be used is complex and quite abstract, let me first situate it by imagining a context.

You are sitting in a department meeting, minding your own business, when a colleague sitting next to you commits an indelicacy. Suppose that he makes a loud sound, one that is completely forbidden in public. You immediately get the impression that everyone is looking at you, rather than the real culprit.

Knowing that his audiences are capable of forming bad impressions... the individual may come to feel ashamed (1) of a well-intentioned honest act merely because the context of its performance provides false impressions that are bad. Feeling this unwarranted shame (2), he may feel that his feelings can be seen; feeling that he is thus seen, he may feel that his appearance confirms these false conclusions concerning him [Author's comment: **Here is an example that might clarify the preceding sentence:** *you become conscious of a warm blush on your face, which might lead to yet further blushing*]. (3). He may then add to the precariousness of his position by engaging in just those defensive maneuvers that he would employ were he really guilty. In this way it is possible for all of us to become fleetingly for ourselves the worst person we can imagine that others might imagine us to be (4). (p. 236. Emphasis and example added)

From the point of view of this passage, it wouldn't much matter whether others were really looking at you, or you are just imagining it. The jolting roller coaster ride through the steps of the looking glass self would be an excruciatingly painful moment either way.

Furthermore, later events might not cancel out the pain completely. Suppose after a few seconds of unbearable silence, your colleague jumps up from his chair, loudly squeezing further noises from a whoopee cushion he has been hiding. Even though you are part of the ensuing laughter, the pain, brief though it was, was real.

One might criticize Goffman's example, however. Although entertaining, might it be seen as making a mountain out of a molehill? How does one get from such brief moments up to social structure and process?

Solidarity and Alienation

By expanding it beyond social interaction, Goffman's definition of co-presence might form the basis for a concept of solidarity that applies both to individual and/or groups. It might also be used to create a single-meaning, general approach to degrees of social integration (solidarity/alienation). For this purpose the definition of co-presence can be rephrased as:

Solidarity between two parties means that they share a joint focus of attention, agreeing or disagreeing with the same proposition (1), perceive that they do so (2), and perceive this perceiving (3).

However, Goffman did only the easy part, 1. Solidarity (complete attunement). He didn't continue to the point of exploring different types and degrees of alienation (failures of attunement) by considering the number and distribution of errors of perception: 2. Partially attuned (only one error by one party), 3. Connected/disconnected: one error by both parties), or asymmetric alienation (2 errors by one party) 4. Mostly alienated: one error by one party, two errors by the other, and 5. Complete alienation (two errors by both parties)

To simplify matters, this paper will propose a model that considers only verbal propositions. In the long run, the model would also need to non-verbal contents at level 1, such as emotions. Another limitation of the present discussion is that it will concern only situations where there can be an agreement to disagree.

The reason for the latter limitation is the size of the resulting matrix. Three things taken two at a time leads to a table with 64 cells. However, if we consider only propositions where there can be agreement to disagree, then cells need to be named in only one quadrant (16 cells), since the other 3 quadrants are mirror images. That is, the same structures of awareness occur in each of the other three quadrants (Jack-Gwen --, +-, ++; see the table below).

There are a host of situations in which first level agreement or disagreement matters less than the other two levels. In many substantive matters, and in many types of relationships, there can be agreement to disagree. That is, agreement/disagreement is not significant because both parties are aware, to some degree, of the agreement or disagreement.

Many issues are not important in themselves to the extent that parties have mutual awareness. If both parties are tolerant of alternative beliefs, this kind of acceptance can go as far as living in parallel universes. The anthropological visitor might understand the natives' perspective, and they might understand his. Rather than leading to disputes, it can be educational or even entertaining for both sides. You believe what? You've got to be kidding (laughter on both sides).

However, there are situations in which the first level is at least as important as the other two levels combined. For example, where the substance of the first level is relevant to survival. If the captain of a sailing ship believed that the earth was round, but his crew that it was flat, then no amount of attunement is going enable them to cooperate.

Another matter at which the first level is crucially important in itself, no matter the state of the other levels, is that both parties agree with the proposition that the other party is human like self, one who feels pleasures and pains similar to those of self. No manner of awareness is going to surmount the disagreement of one or both parties on this issue. Violence lurks in such a situation. Discussion of this model under these circumstances must await another day in a much longer treatment. This paper will consider the simple situation in which agreement/disagreement is less important than understanding and misunderstanding.

Degrees of Mutual Awareness between Two Parties

1. First level co-orientation: agree or disagree
2. Second level: perceive agreement or disagreement
3. Third level: perceive that agreement or disagreement is perceived

Jack's orientation toward a proposition:
+ means agree, - means disagree

Level 1.		+				-						
		+		-		+		-				
2.		1.		2.		3.						
3.		+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-			
Gwen/s orientation toward a proposition: + means agree, - means disagree	+	+	+	1	2	3	4					
		+	-	5	6	7	8					
		-	+	9	10	11	12					
		-	-	13	14	15	16					
	-	+	+									
		+	-									
		-	+									
		-	-									

(This extreme rightwing statement can be used to provide an example of a proposition: Criticizing our government always plays into the hands of our enemies. The more politically aware left and right are not alienating on this issue in that they are probably aware that they disagree, and are aware of this awareness. But what about the rest of the public? This is the kind of problem that might be resolved by survey questions)

Cells:

1. **Attunement:** Jack and Gwen agree, both perceive that they agree, and both perceive that they perceive.
2. Jack knows that Gwen agrees, but incorrectly thinks that Gwen doesn't know that Jack agrees
3. Jack incorrectly thinks that Gwen disagrees, but correctly thinks that Gwen knows that Jack agrees.
4. Jack incorrectly thinks that j. disagrees and incorrectly thinks that Gwen thinks that Jack agrees
5. Jack incorrectly thinks that Gwen thinks that Jack agrees but correctly thinks
- 6. Attunement**
7. Jack incorrectly thinks that Gwen disagrees, and that Gwen thinks that Jack disagrees
8. Jack thinks incorrectly that Gwen disagrees, but correctly that Gwen thinks that Jack agrees

The remainder cell types are symmetric around the attunement diagonal?

9

10

11. **Attunement**

12

13

14

15

16. **Attunement**

There seems to be 5 stations in the continuum of social integration: 1. Agreement or disagreement with no perceptual errors: attunement (solidarity). 2. One error by one party, who is only partially attuned to the other party. 3. Two errors: both by one party, or one by each party. The first might be called asymmetric alienation; the second, connected/disconnected 4. Three errors: Two errors by one party; that party is completely alienated, one error by the other party, who is only partially alienated. 5. Two errors by both parties (complete alienation, whether they are in agreement or not)

Table 2: TYPOLOGY OF SOCIAL INTEGRATION

Number of errors of perception of the other's agreement/disagreement.

No errors	One error	Two errors	Three errors	Four errors
Solidarity	Alienation-	Alienation--*	Alienation---	Complete alienation---

*The two errors can be by one party (alienation of that party from the other party, who is not alienated from the first party), or one error by each party, solidarity/alienation balance of one error by each party.

An example of #3, two errors. When I was Goffman's TA at Berkeley in the 1950's, he understood me better than I understood him. I didn't understand his lectures, but I didn't know that I didn't understand. He understood that I didn't understand. I was more alienated from him than him from me. Not only on this issue, but perhaps many others. He was way over my head, as he was over most of the graduate students. He was a new comet on the horizon, but we were not dazzled by it since we didn't understand.

As similar situation is often found in the relationship between therapists and their patients. In the film *Good Will Hunting*, the resolution of the patient's problem occurs because the therapist understands that the patient is hiding certain emotions from himself. The therapist understands the patient better than he understands himself. In my own involvement in psychotherapy I had a very similar experience to the one depicted in the film.

Marriage counselors report another variation of alienation-- in marital therapy. One of the pair may be extremely dissatisfied with the marriage, but the spouse may be completely unaware of his/her partner's dissatisfaction. Usually the dissatisfied partner is aware that the satisfied partner is unaware. In the film *Ordinary People*, the husband is aware that his wife is unaware of his dissatisfaction. In some cases, the partner is unaware because dissatisfaction has not been revealed by the other party. But in some cases, it has been revealed, but the satisfied partner has not heard it, or chosen not to hear it.

The medical sociology literature suggests that doctors and their patients are often alienated in the sense that the doctor is unaware of the extent of the patient's emotional upset, but the patient may think that he or she is aware. Neither may be aware of the lack of awareness, which would mean alienation----, a complete disconnct.

The psychiatrist Daniel Stern (1984; 1995) seems to be referring to some of these structures in his analysis of what he calls "mismatches" in the communication of mothers and infants. Collective denial (Zerubavel, 2006) implies a specific type of alienated awareness structure: both parties agree, but don't know they agree, and know that each doesn't know they agree. That is, they all might have the sense of having mutual awareness, but in the silence, cannot be sure. In families where incest has been committed, for example, the victim may come to reject her/his own memories.

Levels and Frames

The idea of mutual awareness can be identified in all of Goffman's work, though his language is somewhat evasive. He never states flatly, as Cooley did, that "we live in the minds of others." Yet most of his work seems to assume it. In his later work on language, the subtext implies that mutual awareness is crucial for actually understanding discourse. He challenged the formal conversation and discourse analysis practice of restricting their attention to texts, without regard to the larger context. In the next to last sentence of his last article, he stated:

[In all social interaction] we find ourselves with one central obligation: to render our behavior understandably relevant to what the other can come to perceive is going on. Whatever else, our activity must be addressed to the other's mind, that is, to the other's capacity to read our words and actions for evidence of our feelings, thoughts, and intent²(1983, p. 53, emphasis added).

The meaning of discourse is ultimately not in the text alone, but also in minds. This is a clear statement of the crucial importance of mutual awareness.

In his exploration of what he called 'frames,' Goffman may have been pointing toward another kind of recursive model of awareness structures, one that could develop the idea of context into a true concept (Scheff 2006, Chapter 5). Goffman's discussion of keying (1974, pp 40-82) requires mutual awareness of the participants. Both animals and human's recognize fighting as play or non-play because they are mutually aware of the key signals. Similarly, the idea of "footing," (p. 128 and passim), involves participants in mutual recognition of shifts in alignment of self and other.

Chapter 8 concerns the informal bracketing that takes place in ordinary discourse. For example, to show that one is representing a person other than self, a speaker may bracket an utterance by using a flagrantly high or low voice: men speaking falsetto to mime a woman's voice, or women *basso profundo* representing a man's. Visual bracketing can represent quotation marks with strokes by two fingers of each hand. In the course of referring to this kind of everyday bracketing, Goffman briefly refers to bracketing in mathematical notation:

Mathematics... employs the elegant and powerful device of simple typographic brackets...[to] establish boundaries ... It is as though here all our human capacity to think and act in terms of frame were compressed and refined...(1974, pp.254-255)

In this passage, Goffman lapses from his usual detached, ironic tone, displaying what for him appears to be overwhelming enthusiasm: "elegant" and "refined." With his eerie prescience, but without mathematical training, perhaps he sensed a possibility, but didn't carry through.

Baptista has taken the next step toward the end of his essay on frame analysis (2003, p. 208). He proposed that any frame assembly can be represented as composed of core frame, layers, and rim (the last frame)

$$F = 1_{n+1} [1_{n...} [1_2 [1_1 [1_0]]]...],$$

Where 1_0 represents the core frame, F, the rim, and the other 1 's, zero to n, represent all the levels between. By enclosing points of view of others within the brackets, this notation can

² I am indebted to Greg Smith for calling my attention to this passage.

be used to represent structures of shared awareness of individuals and groups. In my chapter on seeing frame analysis as developing context as a concept (Scheff 2006, chapter 5) I further develop the mathematical notation. Perhaps if Goffman had used the term bracket rather than frame, there would have been less confusion over the meaning of his book.

Goffman may have sensed that mathematical notation would need to be used to show recursion within frame assemblies because they might be very large. In most circumstances the context includes not only the local situation and past relationships between the parties but extends up the level of social institutions. With many frames in an assembly, verbal descriptions of the context easily become vertiginous, as Goffman's book demonstrates. A description of a frame assembly in ordinary language that would take many pages might be described with the use of mathematical notation in only a few lines.

Since the recursive model of degree of social integration offered here has only three levels, mathematical notation will probably not be needed. Carrere et al (2000) showed that degree of that a sense of "we-ness" predicted the behavior of married couples better than mere agreement. Other studies use a variety of indicators, such as eye gaze direction, to measure awareness structures (Malle and Hodge 2005).

Group structures could be somewhat more complex, however, because they would require representation of various levels of awareness among sub-groups. As far as I know at this point, this kind of study, which would involve questions that explored not only the respondent's opinions, but two or more levels of mutual perception, have not been done. The ideas of consensus and social facts particularly require some compact way of moving up and down many rungs of the micro-macro ladder. Rather than merely three levels, in defining context, one might be faced with twenty or thirty levels.

In an earlier article (Scheff 1967), I proposed a model of consensus that has a recursive quality like the one that runs through Goffman's work. The article suggested that consensus involves not only understanding the other, but also understanding that one is understood, and vice versa. Consensus involves not only a first level agreement, but, when necessary, second and higher levels of understanding that there is agreement.

As it happened, Goffman pursued a similar idea in some parts of his book (1969) on strategic interaction. Under certain conditions, as in spying operations, diplomatic and financial negotiations, and in my opinion, truly intimate relationships, it becomes necessary to be aware of higher levels of mutual awareness; that is, of mutual awareness of mutual awareness, etc. He implies that the winning spy or negotiator would be the one who is able to accurately understand a level higher than one's competitor. And in my own work toward developing a concept of secure bonds that would include both true solidarity and genuine love, I have proposed that higher levels of mutual awareness are necessary, rather than optional components (Scheff 2006 Chapter 7)

Love as a Type of Solidarity

Most unabridged dictionaries list about two dozen meanings for the word love. One of them always implies the idea of the unity of lovers:

A deep, tender, ineffable feeling of affection and solicitude toward a person, such as that arising from kinship, recognition of attractive qualities, or a sense of underlying oneness (American Heritage Dictionary 1992, emphasis added).

As love poems and songs have proclaimed forever, two can become one, at least momentarily:

So they lov'd, as love in twain
Had the essence but in one;
Two distincts, division none:
Number there in love was slain. (Shakespeare's Phoenix and Turtle)

Genuine love involves moments of mutual mind and heart reading that transform two into one.

Attempting to define what is meant by perversion, the philosopher Thomas Nagel (1978) came near to defining normal, or at least non-perverse sex in terms of recursive mutual awareness³. Although he doesn't use that term, or any of the others I have used, such as intersubjectivity, his definition of sexual love in terms of each knowing that the other knows one another's feeling certainly implies it:

These [sexual] reactions are perceived, and the perception of them is perceived; at each step the domination of the person by his body is reinforced, and the sexual partner becomes more possessible by physical contact, penetration, and envelopment. (p. 48).

Note that Nagel's idea requires that mutual awareness involves sharing not only cognitive, but even more importantly, emotional components.

Discussion

The higher levels of mutual awareness in a recursive model of mutual awareness might clarify and extend Durkheim's idea (1915) of the "social facts" that individuals experience as external and constraining. He proposed that there are many areas of unspoken, taken-for-granted agreement in societies that constitute a conscience collectif. Although this phrase is usually translated into English as "collective conscience," it can equally well be translated as collective consciousness, sometimes translated, albeit awkwardly, as Group Mind.

The complex cognitive structure of mutual awareness discussed here might help explain why members would experience social facts as "external." The recursive levels would insure their externality, since each individual understands them to be in the consciousness of others, and that his or her own participation in social facts or lack of it is also perceived by others.

Although Cooley, Mead and Dewey don't engage this issue, the attribution of understandings to others cannot always be pure projection, at least in the long run. As Garfinkel and writers in the CA tradition have made clear, one's understanding of the other person's utterance in one turn may be re-affirmed or challenged in subsequent turns. At least in discourse that has more than one turn, each speaker can observe signs that bear on the accuracy of his or her attributions to the other person.

³ Ronald de Souza called this essay to my attention.

This issue of the degree to which beliefs about the other(s) are pure projection turns out to be much more complicated than the CA approach has allowed. A wife who wants to believe her husband's claim that he loves her may ignore or misinterpret turns and behaviors that give the lie to his statement. The bestseller Women Who Love Too Much (1985) is based on interviews with women in this situation. An example of this problem on a larger scale comes up in the politics of voter support for the present U.S. government. In the late months of 2006, it appears that a substantial proportion of voters still trust their government, even though it has proven itself not deserving of trust.

But in most cases, it would appear that the attributions that are components of social facts are not pure projections. That is, each individual's experience with others has given them external grounds for believing that their attributions are correct. To the extent that this is the case, the externality of the social fact to each individual is at least in part an objective fact, not just a projection.

At the time that my article (1967) was published, I had no way of explaining why social facts would be experienced as constraining. Subsequently, however, the sociology of emotions has suggested a possibility. If, as Lewis (1971) has proposed, the fundamental basis for genuine pride is attunement with others, and for shame, lack of attunement, then the incentive for participation in the awareness structures of social facts is not only cognitive, but also emotional.

The individual would feel powerfully constrained by social facts because he or she is rewarded by pride when participating in them, and punished by shame when not (Scheff 1988). Durkheim (1915) posited a social emotion that encourages social integration, but referred to it only as respect. In my formulation, respect is an emotional/relational correlate of the pride end of the pride/shame continuum. One is rewarded by pride to the extent that one participates, level by level, in the cognitive structure of mutual awareness, and punished by shame, level by level, to the extent that one does not. A model of social facts in terms of levels of awareness would explain why social facts are experienced as external and constraining.

A recursive model of mutual awareness could be researched through sample surveys of beliefs and opinions. The question of business confidence, for example, would require questions not only about the respondent's confidence, but her perception of confidence levels of others, and, at the third level, her perception of their perception of the confidence levels of others. Such an approach might have a greater predictive value than the investigation of only the first level.

Conclusion

This essay has proposed concepts of solidarity and alienation based on a recursive model of mutual awareness. This model might be applicable to both interpersonal and societal phenomena. Empirical studies of discourse could analyze the rise and fall of mutual awareness second by second. Survey methods could be used to study the current levels of mutual awareness in groups. Vernacular words might be replaced by clearly defined concepts. Attunement and love could be studied using the definitions of solidarity and alienation proposed here. The model using mathematical notation involving recursive bracketing might make it possible to visualize and research collective context, consensus and social facts.

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