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CULTURAL REPERTOIRES

This issue of the newsletter contains a set of papers from a stimulating session held at the ASA meetings in Anaheim, California, in 2001. All of this was written before the events of September 11th. However, it is readily apparent that the methodological and theoretical issues discussed are directly relevant to many aspects of the changed national and international situation. JB

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Cultural Repertoires: Introduction

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In the fall of 2000 I was invited to organize sessions for the 2001 ASA meetings by both Cynthia Fuchs Epstein, Chair of the Culture Section, and Charles Ragin, Chair of the Comparative Historical Section. The topic of each session was open, and after consultation with Charles, we agreed to

co-organize a session on the topic of "Theoretical and Methodological Implications of 'Cultural Repertoires' (CR)." The Council of the Comparative Historical section thought the session would be of interest to the section, and so we offer a summary of the papers in this edition of this newsletter.

The contributors to the session were chosen from papers submitted via regular ASA channels, after having secured the important participation of Ann Swidler. By chance, the papers by Ewa Morawska, Ilana Silber, and Andrew McLean complemented each other nicely in that they each used or compared diverse intellectual tools used to study cultural repertoires. We invited Aldon Morris to act as discussant because we believed that an intervention by a social movement specialist could move the discussion in interesting, unexpected directions.

There is no need to offer a summary of the "summaries" presented here. These offer a glimpse of important ongoing debates that are leading sociologists to refine our understanding of the notion of cultural structure (Sewell 1992), the causal role of culture, and culture's relationship to a notion of "hard social structure." These "sketches of papers" may help us continue to rethink some of the key theoretical issues that are shared by cultural sociologists and comparative historical sociologists. They are offered here as "food for thought" in anticipation of a more sustained explicit exchange across the two fields.

Note by the webmanager: Ann Swidler's paper is now available online in the [Winter 2002 issue](#) of the newsletter. --MD, May 21, 2002.

The Study of Boundaries in Comparative-Historical and Cultural Sociology

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Why choose "cultural repertoires" (CR) as the focus of a 'joint-sections-session'? Simply because this notion plays a key role in the research currently conducted in cultural sociology and comparative historical sociology -- two fields whose ASA sections membership overlap substantially. While in cultural sociology, the concept is mostly associated with Ann Swidler's path-breaking 1986 article "Culture in Action," in comparative historical sociology it has been popularized primarily by the writings of Charles Tilly on "repertoires of contention" (e.g., Tilly 1993). Both fields have also witnessed the emergence of theoretical tools that share a "family resemblance" with the notion of repertoire.

For instance, following the work of David Snow and his collaborators (see Benford and Snow 2000), sociologists are extending the application of frame analysis to capture the differently structured frameworks used across a range of issues in a variety of national and historical contexts. Similarly, in a more phenomenological vein, neo-institutionalists have

focused on widely available accounts used to capture the construction of personhood and rationality across settings. Somers and Gibson (1994), among others, have made the concept of "narrative" --with its supra-individual connotation-- more salient in ongoing scholarship on identity. In France, Boltanski and Thévenot (1991) have proposed an analysis of "orders of justification" that people deploy to assess whether an action benefits the common good. They distinguish a plurality of "grammars of worth," in which each kind of worth is a way to raise persons and things to "common-ness."

In my own work, I have focused on the cultural tools that workers and professionals draw on to generate boundaries toward various social groups, including blacks, immigrants, the poor, and "the upper half" (Lamont 2000). While Swidler has been particularly concerned with the tools available, I have been more concerned with analyzing what tools groups are more likely to use given the structural situation in which they find themselves (Lamont 1992, p. 135). Finally, in my collaborative work with Laurent Thévenot, we show that elementary grammars or schemas are unevenly present across national cultural repertoires (Lamont and Thévenot 2000). We find that certain tools are more readily available in France than in the United States, with the result that members of these communities do not give the same symbolic weight to particular distinctions.

By using theoretical tools developed by cultural sociologists over the last twenty years, including that of cultural repertoires, we move beyond the psychologism, naturalism, and essentialism that characterized much of the comparative cultural analysis tradition, from Ferdinand Toennies to Talcott Parsons, Francis Fukiyama and Samuel Huntington.

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Cultural Repertoires and the Practices of Collective Identity

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What is the value of 'cultural repertoires' (CR) for analyzing middle-range meaning-making processes, specifically in the case of collective identity formation in social movements? Alternate approaches to middle-range meaning-making process cannot be generalized beyond broadly diffused or media-saturated processes, and thus cannot tap meaning making on the middle-range. The cultural repertoires (CR) approach is particularly useful where cultural work is diffuse but not widely dispersed, and where public projection of media images does occur but the cultural work itself is not actually situated in, or carried out for, mass media consumption. In these cases CRs have great analytic promise, and they are tools for which there is a present need. An analytic emphasis on institutionalized practice rather than action broadens the range of activity that should be attended to in understanding the construction of meaning and offers a way to examine individual and collective identity in a politicized context. Rather than privileging narrative, dialogue, or structure, I suggest a perspective that admits a less deterministic relationship by which ideational elements impinge on the creation and change of meaning.

An approach that locates culture in practices as well as in systems of meaning requires increased attention to specific institutions and to institutional fields in order to fulfill its promise in the analysis of collective identity formation and political meaning. This approach affords four key insights:

- The salience of a collective identity emerges in practice.
- The emergence of this collective identity is not deterministic.
- Meanings are situated and made concrete.
- The semantics as well as the syntax of meaning production are made clear.

At any time and place the constellation of identity relations and representations is the outcome of the practiced negotiation of social spaces and the reciprocal defining processes of other social actors. Collective identity is variable. Prior to mobilization it may stand more or less autonomous of issues of resources and power relations. In the

process of organization and mobilization that autonomy will be limited as the links between particular collective identity and organized social movement carriers are crystallized. Just as collective identity is unavoidably bound up in social structure and power, so are its attendant CRs.

Institutions are the ground on which the figure of the collective identity is visible. Yet to see the dimensions of collective identity against an institution one must examine them in both a concrete sense of their exteriority, and in a Durkheimian sense of their facticity.

On the first point, as Arthur Stinchcombe (1997) emphasizes, the influences of institutions do not take place only through disembodied logics and invisible hands. Agents of institutional action are often persons pursuing specific agendas (with greater or lesser degrees of success, of course). As the studies I reference demonstrate, an actor's access to and privilege with certain CRs is variable, chiefly with institutions' exteriority.

On the second point, institutions make demands on actors and provide incentives for their fulfillment. Institutions make practices intelligible and as such provide the most basic of public goods. Furthermore, institutions also structure action so that other public goods are provided in cases of mixed incentive structures. Institutions are served in the context of relations of reciprocity and obligation, as indicated by the deep cultural resonance of the concepts of "stewardship" and "custodianship." In cultural analysis, practitioners should be attentive to the ways persons orient toward serving institutions, and in so doing serve their long term interests. Moreover, this relationship is reinforced in the short run by the distribution of prestige, which can be understood in examples I discuss below in terms of being a "good" mother or woman, a "legitimate" organizer, or a "righteous" clergyman.

Thirdly, institutions are concrete arenas for the negotiation of collective identity, and that the availability of CRs depends on historical and institutional conditions. Elisabeth Clemens (1996) finds that in the early American labor movement organizational tools in the CR were differentially available to social actors on the basis of whether they were "appropriate," whether practical knowledge was available, and what "clusters of institutions" exerted control over those tools (Clemens 1996, pp. 208-209).

In addition, institutions distribute social prestige and may legitimize or delegitimize collective identities. Recall that Kristen Luker (1984) finds that acceptance of abortion on demand implies repudiation of costly choices already made by women in the political camp opposed to abortion rights. The strength of these abortion opponents' investment in these life choices explains the strength of their mobilization against abortion rights. The institution involved in this struggle—motherhood—distributes the prestige of being a "good" woman as exhibited in practices of child rearing and attendant choices for career and life path. Luker surmises that as they were entering professional career trajectories her pro-choice participants found new patterns of association that were important to recognize common experiences and were thus the bases on which to assert a new collective identity and challenge the politics of the institution of motherhood. In short, the choices of enacting different sets from the

CR of motherhood carried different valences for Luker's participants, and these valences varied with the life choices they had already made.

Finally, access to various cultural repertoires in collective identity work varies with local institutional practices. I found that clergy exposed to the anti-Vietnam war movement in different locations had different repertoires of action legitimately available to them because of their locally variable institutional locations. They chose different courses of action depending on the institutional configurations in which they worked. These clergy made choices for their futures in terms of their institutional positions, choices that they articulate in terms of their loyalties and their commitment to the goals of their work and the risks they therefore tried to mitigate (McLean 2000).

As Clemens notes, the "conceptual abyss between movements and politics may be bridged" by "multiple more or less bounded, more or less compatible organizational fields" (Clemens 1996, p. 213). Yet those organizational fields should be understood to be affected by more or less bounded, more or less compatible institutional fields that order the potential set of meanings and desirable outcomes for the practice of meaning-making actors.

Clemens' conceptual abyss requires a cultural bridge. Indeed, meaning-making processes depend on the history and configuration of those fields, the course of unpredictable historical events, and the outcomes of mobilization processes that may or may not be contested. In those processes discursive, institutional, and organizational fields are subject to change and modification, as new collective identities mark actors' success in making legitimate techniques deployed from the 'cultural repertoire.'

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Convergences and Cleavages in the Study of Cultural Repertoires: Theorizing the Inner Structure of Tool-kits, Symbolic Boundaries and Regimes of Justification

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1. Imported from the world of the performing arts, the idea of cultural repertoires has important theoretical advantages and is now successfully competing with previous key metaphors in the study of culture (such as cultural systems, cultural codes, or culture-as-text). Most important, perhaps, it is useful in conveying the image of a structure that is both enabling and constraining; limiting but also flexible; and relatively stable yet never utterly static or closed-- thus also very much in line with the processual and dialectical thrust of current approaches to the notion of structure (Giddens 1984; Sewell 1992). Closely related, it has also proven distinctively attune to the increasing interest in culture-in-action — also loosely designed as the turn to practice—that has been a central feature of sociological (and anthropological) theory since the 1980's (Ortner 1986).

As such, however, cultural repertoire theory has been less conducive to, and may even be said to have obstructed, the advancement of forms of cultural analysis capable of targeting the inner structure of cultural formations. Close reading of three bodies of work that have much contributed to promote the notion of cultural repertoire will be used here as a way of bringing into relief the tension between a theoretical stress on culture as practice and a growing interest in more systematically mapping out the inner structures of cultural repertoires. More specifically, I submit, we may see a move from a largely unstructured approach in Ann Swidler's seminal work on cultural tool-kits (1986), through a two-tiered model in Michèle Lamont's comparative research on symbolic boundaries and national cultural repertoires (1992), to a stronger search for structure in Swidler's more recent ideas on anchoring cultural practices (2001) and in the context of studies associated with Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot's new French pragmatic sociology (1991; 1999).

2. The starting point here is Swidler's suggestive image of the tool-kit (tightly intertwined with that of repertoire), i.e. her view of culture's causal significance not in defining ends of action, but in providing the components, or tools used to construct strategies of action (Swidler 1986). Cultural tool-kits, in this early statement, remain largely unstructured entities: Swidler does not introduce any internal distinctions, nor any principle of internal organization that may have helped us, or the actors, to put some order within their respective tool-kits.

Significantly, Swidler has recently started to correct for the lack of internal structuring of culture in her initial conception, which she also identifies as a problematic feature of theories of practices more generally (see Swidler 2001). The important task now, as she sees it, is to try and establish some sort of hierarchy among cultural practices, and explore which cultural practices organize, anchor or constrain others; most likely to be central, moreover, are practices that enact constitutive rules that define

fundamental social entities, thus also anchoring whole larger domains of practice and discourse; but also, clearly enough, bringing us far from our initial impression of cultural repertoires as largely unstructured tool-kits

3. Mobilizing systematic comparative research in France and the United States, Lamont introduces the idea of national cultural repertoires as a way of referring mainly to broad, influential intellectual, religious and political historical currents or traditions that provide individuals with readily usable cultural notions that can then be mobilized in boundary work and thus help explain their choice of boundary criteria of "worthiness." Emerging thus from her approach, in contrast, is a stratified, at least two-layered cultural structure, that distinguishes between remote, macro-cultural repertoires and proximate, usable cultural "tool-kits," the first providing and even shaping the symbolic contents, or resources entailed in the latter. Traces of elemental structure also emerge with regard to the relation among boundary criteria themselves, their varying tendency to combine or remain autonomous from each other. Yet even in this two-tiered approach, cultural repertoires still remain rather loose symbolic-ideological aggregates, governed by no internal logic or principle, no specific form of structural or systemic relation nor identifiable symbolic dynamics.

4. A more active interest in the internal structures of cultural repertoires is definitely at work in the framework of Boltanski and Thévenot's new pragmatic sociology. Individual actors, in their perspective, are endowed with an essential competence for evaluation and criticism, and by a flexible capacity to switch codes from one situation to another. Yet they can only choose from, and tend to rely upon, the ultimately limited pool of alternative regimes of criticism and justification that happen to have been made available to them, historically, in what we may well call their cultural repertoire or even cultural "tool-kit." Each regime of justification has its own distinctive internal 'logic,' methodically analyzed along some thirteen parameters of analysis. Moreover, the relation between the alternative regimes of justification is seen as one of constant, principled tension and contradiction within one same repertoire—rather than just a situation of chaos or total absence of structure. Last, pragmatic sociology distinguishes and tries to bridge between at least two, perhaps even three levels of analysis: principles of evaluation as used in day to day life; textual philosophical traditions; and managerial literature—a sort of third, intermediate level of cultural articulation between that of "popular" common-sense and that of rigorous, high-brow philosophies. Whatever the weaknesses and unresolved dilemmas in this approach, it does have the merit of trying to introduce some form of order in a cultural "tool-kit" or repertoire that other theorists, as we saw, have yet tended to leave largely or only weakly unstructured.

5. By and large, however, there seems to remain a built-in, perhaps unavoidable theoretical tension between stressing plurality and flexibility in the conceptualization of cultural repertoires on the one hand and trying also to endow these very same loose, flexible entities with any form or principle of internal structure on the other. One way of contributing to resolve that tension, I wish to submit, is to build upon an aspect of Swidler's early 1986 article—namely, her stance of principled opposition to any unitary, ontological theory of culture—that I find no less provocative than her influential image of the tool-kit, and yet has been left largely unheeded. Very briefly, Swidler's argument is that the relation

between culture and social action, and culture and social structure are said to "vary across time and historical situations," and there is no one way of theorizing them. In this regard, she mainly proposed to distinguish between two major types of situations at least: culture as it operates in "settled" vs. "unsettled" lives or situations—locating thus the source of the distinction, as it were, "outside" of culture, in the impact of situational, historical contingencies.

Pushing this argument one step further, culture may not always have the same internal structure, may not always be made up of the same type of building blocks, components or clusters, and may not always entail the same form of relations, or linkages between its various components. The task then becomes to labor at demarcating coexisting levels, aspects or domains of culture without prejudging in any ways or theorizing in only one way the relation or mode of interaction between these various levels among themselves and as they affect social action and social structure—leaving such issues rather to the empirical investigation of specific cases and contexts. Such a stance, to my mind, has the advantage of being still highly compatible with the idea of cultural repertoires and its overall "pluralistic," and practical temper, while also combining it with aspects of the more traditional phenomenological and interpretative sociological projects that have still been left largely unheeded and are still very much part of the tool-kit available to us in promoting new forms of comparative cultural sociology.

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'Cultural Repertoire' in a Structuration Process: Theoretical and Research Implications

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I propose here the conceptualization of a "cultural repertoire" (CR) as an integral element of the structuration process. So conceived, I argue, it should be treated as both a structure and a constitutive component of human agency. Such conceptualization contributes to the sociology of culture and comparative-historical sociology in two ways: it resolves the dualism of macro- and micro- analysis and it historicizes (or, sets in motion) cultural repertoires. By conceiving of CR as processes rather than as static phenomena it sets them in motion historically, thus bridging the gap between a static view of culture and a comparative-historical view of culture. This insight is translated in the paper by examining the implications in terms of research on migrant workers from Poland in Germany. The complex texture of the orientations and coping strategies of undocumented migrant workers (*Arbeitstouristen*) from postcommunist Poland that is discussed in the forty page paper cannot be adequately summarized here (Morawska, forthcoming). However, a brief presentation of the Methodology, theory and method will be attempted. Implications of the treatment of cultural repertoires as integral parts of the structuration process can be considered in these terms.

Epistemological Aspects of Methodology: The conceptualization of changing time and space coordinates of social life as the constitutive mediums of cultural repertoires, intrinsic to social relations and institutions, and, thus, as flexibly limiting frames for CRs as symbolic guideposts of action, makes the analysis of such frames, both at the structural and the individual level, into an inherently historical undertaking. From these epistemological premises a rule of inquiry can be derived.: Why cultural repertoires (CR) as structures and as personal "tool kits" come into being, change, or persist, is explained by showing how they do it. The "why" is explained by the "how," when we explain and further demonstrate "how" the cultural repertoires have been shaped over time through changing circumstances (Sewell 1996; Calhoun 1996, Isaac 1997).

Research Theory: Although this epistemological approach precludes construction of general, universal theories, it by no means abandons theory altogether. Studies of cultural repertoires conceptualized in historical, context-contingent structuration frameworks can profit from the

scrutiny and elaboration of the theoretical principles guiding socio-historical inquiry that have been offered by historical sociologists. Hall (1999) distinguishes, for example, between the particularizing and generalizing strategies of explanation.

In the particularizing strategy the major emphasis is on the explanation of cases or the interpretation of one case. This can include "specific history" or "configurational history." This might involve identifying "the relevant range of structural possibilities."

In the generalizing strategy, according to Hall, the thrust is the fitting or generating of theory. This may involve detailed examination of the utility of a model according to its "ability to convincingly order the evidence" (Skocpol and Somers 1980, cited by Hall 1999). It can also involve "analytical generalization," which has as its purpose empirical/historical testing of hypotheses about "transitory regularities" (Joynt and Rescher 1961). A third generalizing strategy can be "contrast-oriented comparison."

The conceptualization of cultural repertoires (CR) accommodates very well some of Hall's particularizing and generalizing theoretical strategies.

Methods of Research: As inherently historical phenomena, CR also require that the concern about the workings and effects of different temporal dimensions of meaningful social interactions be an integral part of research. Temporal dimensions include the pace or tempo of events and activities, their duration, rhythm or regularity, and their trajectory of sequence. Different methods of sociohistorical inquiry are not just based on exclusively qualitative or quantitative research methods.

The treatment of cultural repertoires is undoubtedly a challenge for researchers because of the irreducible complexity and multiple contingency of the investigated processes and the indeterminacy of the results. But, as several research projects informed by the approach have amply demonstrated, this approach – in terms of Methodology, research theory, and research methods – generates encompassing, robust and nuanced accounts of the unfolding structuration of socio-cultural phenomena. For example, this includes treating CRs as structures and tool kits and matters of agency and then considering how the structure-agency divide is re-constituted by CRs and tool kits over time.

Brief Summary of the Research Project: It is not possible to even begin to summarize all of the nuances of the situation here, but a few words can be said by way of summary. The study concerns orientations and coping strategies of undocumented migrant workers. Within temporarily stable economic and political macro-structural conditions in sender and receiver countries, the realization of Polish tourist worker's goals required mutual trust among the actors engaged with each other in negotiating structures. This mutual trust is based on everybody involved keeping their word and playing fair according to shared cultural codes. A deviation from the shared cultural codes (CRs) results in group ostracism. Migrants wish to sojourn in Berlin as long as possible in order to accumulate maximum possible savings. As migrants overstay their visas and continue clandestine employment, the individual cultural tools become a culture structure – a socially embedded and normatively sanctioned cluster of

guideposts for planning and executing the desired projects that, in turn, sustains the individual cultural codes (coda). The structuration model posits the mutual reconstitution over time of structure and agency. However, that reconstitution over time allows for alterations in the pattern of the reciprocal engagements that spring from actor's motivations in the schemas and resources informing their actions. The changed situations in which the actors find themselves are particularly conducive to such innovations. Although habituated strategies from the past (i.e. "beat-the-system-bend-the-law" strategies of the homo sovieticus tool kit) constituted the basic components of these migrants' group CRs and personal "tool kits" for the pursuit of their projects, some novel aspects of their situations have mobilized them to devise and to put into practice innovative ways to deal with the new, altered circumstances.

In the German and other Western European media, Polish tourist workers, male and female, have been reported as laboring "docilely" for twelve or fourteen hours a day in conditions that no native workers would tolerate. The willingness of the Polish migrant sojourners to work very hard for long hours under exhausting conditions and to live in overcrowded, often substandard quarters allows those illicit migrants to save and take home up to seventy percent of the average monthly income accrued during their Berlin stay. The "migration culture" that informs their income saving strategies abroad is also being transplanted to sender communities. Returning worker tourists become "role models" for coping in the new, capitalist system. Their visible success (e.g. more middle-class "status symbol" objects) not only sustains out-going migratory flows, but also presents new sets of CRs and individual tools.

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How Culture Works in Social Life

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These papers are rich, stimulating and provocative. They seek to unravel the role that culture plays in concrete social life and to advance theoretical understanding of human behavior. I was struck by the degree of analytical agreement that cuts across Swidler, Silber, McLean and Morawska's papers. I was also struck by the degree to which these papers underemphasized or ignored key factors I believe to be crucial to understanding how culture works in social life and to the development of a robust conceptual framework of cultural dynamics.

These papers agree that cultural phenomena are crucial components of social life that cannot be reduced to other more "fundamental" reality such as social structures, social networks or institutions. Thus the authors declare that cultural matters must be assigned considerable analytical autonomy. All of these authors stress, however, that cultural phenomena are deeply embedded in social structures and other social processes and that, therefore, culture is to be viewed as entangled and deeply rooted in reciprocal relations. They argue that culture and social structure mutually shape, constrain and enable each other. Thus, cultural analysts should always focus on the dynamic reciprocal relationships between culture and social structure.

The authors are also agreed that culture—its belief systems, symbols, values, habits, etc.—does not constitute a unified whole. Indeed, in any society cultural materials are in a continuous state of change and many of its components exist in an uneasy state of tension. In fact, many cultural components within a society, a group or a single individual may operate in a contradictory manner. Thus, our authors resist any unified deterministic theory of culture. So all these formulations, whether it is tool kit theory, cultural repertoire theory, frame analysis or narrative analysis are reluctant to advance a unified theory of culture with a clear causal structure. But herein lies a thorny problem. That is, any useful and robust theory must identify and map out patterns that speak to causal orderings. Good theories soak up the booming, buzzing, confusion of social life and reveal the predictable patterns undergirding apparent chaos.

But discovering such patterns is tricky business for cultural analysts because they theorize that the very nature of their object of study—culture—is constantly changing, often contradictory, often in flux and nondeterministic. How then are they to discover causal patterns in phenomena that are theorized to be dynamic moving targets? The authors' scientific challenges propel them to seek to discover the hidden patterns and internal logic that must underlie cultural matters. They know that if they are unable to discover such patterns, such internal logic, their theoretical enterprise runs the risk of drying up like a raisin in the sun. Lo and behold, these authors have independently discovered what they believe to be this inner logic. For the most part, they have reached the

same conclusion: Institutions largely structure and anchor cultural phenomena. Yet, they still assign a great deal of autonomy to culture both in terms of its role in social life and in their theoretical formulations. Nevertheless, when all is said and done, there is an institutional logic that largely patterns culture. Thus, for McLean, institutionally specified, historically specific approach to cultural repertoires is the analytical strategy that should be pursued. He argues that, "the legitimate availability of elements in the cultural repertoire is determined by institutional relationships" and that "the path to an understanding of the social dimensions of a collective identity lies in understanding its relationship to institutions, in the sense that institutions are the ground on which the figure of the collective identity is visible."

Similarly, Silber emphasizes the role that structural factors play in shaping cultural practices. She is also interested in the possibility that culture itself may contain an internal logic whereby some cultural repertoires change. However, I am still struck by the weight she assigns to structural factors. Structures may be dominant in the shaping of formations and may order the workings of lesser cultural manifestations, cultural trajectories and repertoires. Similarly, I am struck by the weight Morawska assigns to migrating networks in shaping the cultural experiences and actions of Polish migrants.

Swilder (in the paper not represented in this newsletter, JB) is the clearest. For her, an institutional logic patterns and drives culture. Thus, she argues, "that dominant understandings of love are reproduced by the dilemmas of action created by the institution of marriage". Furthermore, "the institution of marriage in some sense generates the culture of love". Swilder states that, "institutions set the problem actors solve" and that institutional gaps generate diverse repertoires. When there are no institutional gaps, culture plays itself out in a routine manner. However, when institutional gaps are present, culture is elaborated because people need to develop new lines of action. Culture, therefore, in Swilder's scheme is the helpmate of institutions. Cultural innovations blossom when institutions are no longer able to dictate human action effectively. Cultural repertoires are constructed to fill institutional gaps. Indeed, Swilder writes, "if these cultural repertoires are solutions to similarly structured problems because the institutional gaps people confront are similar, then the repertoire of solutions will, nonetheless have a similar logic—not a psychological logic, but an institutional one". Clearly, for Swilder, institutions bring theoretical order to the house of culture both socially and analytically.

I think efforts to reconnect culture to institutional and structural logic will yield analytical dividends. Culture is not a disembodied Hegelian enterprise. I believe that under certain conditions culture may drive institutional phenomena while under others, institutional logic may function as the driving force. Only empirical research can establish which logic prevails in concrete historical moments.

In my view, all of the authors are too silent on how power, domination and human agency affect cultural phenomena. I found it interesting that none of the authors mentioned leadership. Leaders are important for they formulate action strategies, mobilize constituencies, manage uncertainty and the media, and they have disproportionate access to institutional and

cultural power. Leaders often embody the cultural symbols that can ignite the engines of institutions. Lamont (2000: p135) is right to argue that it is important to take into account how "remote and proximate structural factors shape choices from and access to the tool kit and that these factors affect the cultural resources most likely to be mobilized by different types of individuals and what elements of tool-kits people have most access to given their social positions." Leaders are generally the individuals occupying strategic institutional spaces conducive to utilizing the tools in the cultural kit.

The Black Church provides an excellent example. The pulpit is the most powerful space in that institution and is considered sacred ground accessible only to clergy. This is one of the reasons why ministers like Martin Luther King, Jr. wielded enormous power during the civil rights movement. Through the pulpit, such leaders were able to use the extensive resources of the Black Church to mobilize and sustain the movement. Leaders in SNCC, CORE and the NAACP envied the ministers who controlled the sacred space of the pulpit. James Farmer, the charismatic leader of CORE, once told me if he could do it all over again, he would attend seminary and become a pastor so he could have access to the pulpit. Social position plays a crucial role in determining who can effectively access cultural repertoires and cultural tools.

Finally, institutions are not equal. Cultural analysts need to investigate the differential power of institutions. Some house enormous cultural and social power making it possible for them to order the action and agendas of lesser institutions in profound ways. For example, historically the Black Church has towered above all other Black institutions because of its organizational resources and because it has functioned as the repository of Black culture. Elsewhere, (Morris, 2000) I have argued that such formations should be conceptualized as agency-laden institutions because they are often longstanding and house enormous cultural and organizational resources that can be mobilized to launch collective action. Agency-laden institutions represent the intersection where social actors and organized cultural resources meet and set human agency into motion. That intersection deserves the attention of cultural analysts.

These papers advance understanding of culture and they seek to discover the inner logic of cultural phenomena. I cannot close without a caution. Analysts cannot be sure just what institutions are and whether they have internal logics of their own. In terms of our theoretical knowledge, institutions may be as slippery as cultural phenomena. I have caricatured these papers in order to reveal their analytical punch. In so doing, my hope is that I have made a small contribution toward the task of unraveling the inner logic of cultural dynamics.

