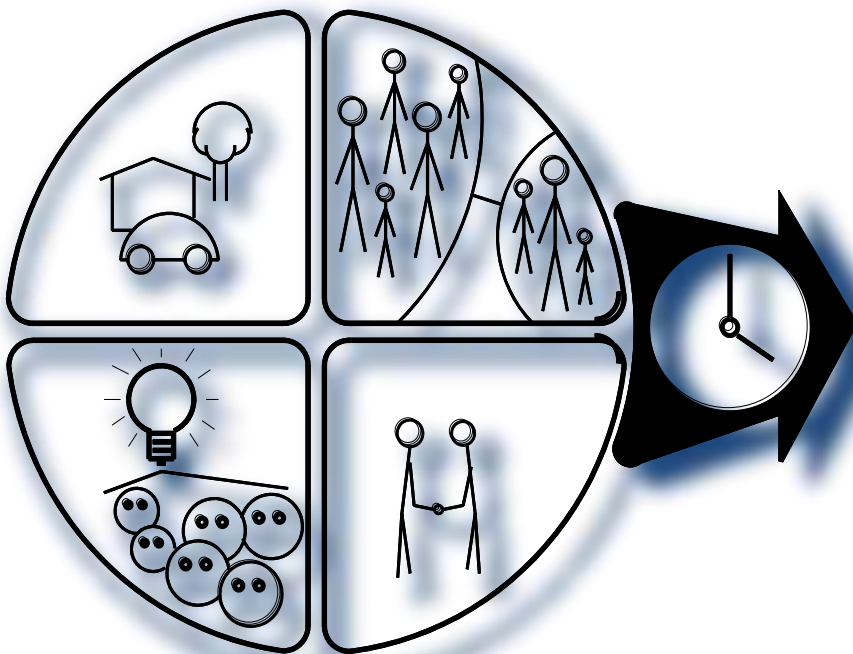


# *Introduction to Systems*

*Social Studies  
Humanities  
Science*



**Part 3**  
Societies  
Shared Ideas  
Action Patterns

Marion Brady and Howard Brady

# ***Introduction to Systems***

Originally “*Connections: Investigating Reality*”

## Part 3: Societies, Shared Ideas, Action Patterns

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## Major Human Systems—Societies

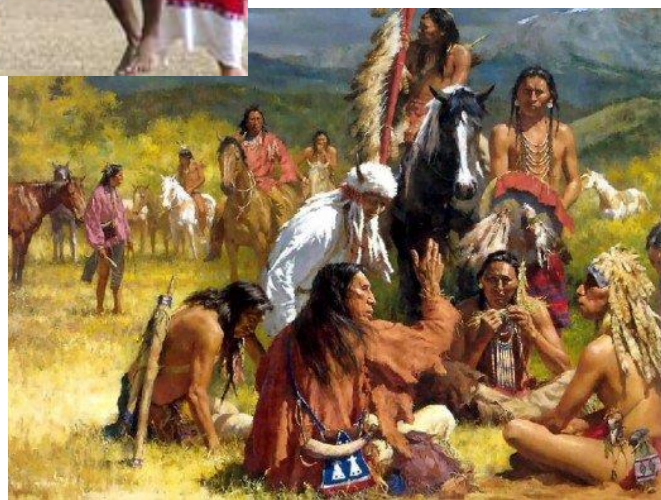
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Systems with humans as components come in all sizes. Families are systems with few members, but systems can contain millions of people. The largest, most important are called “societies.”

Members of societies share ideas, beliefs, and values (sometimes called worldviews), and act in similar ways. In large societies these may vary somewhat between regions and different social classes, but the most important ideas—those that guide people when they make important decisions, or cause anger when they’re violated, will be shared by almost all members of a society.

In the investigations that follow, you’ll study societies that differ significantly from the one in which you were reared. The differences should help you clarify your own ideas and beliefs, and see how those ideas shape ways of acting.

<http://www.tritripura.in/tri/Institutes/Index.aspx>



<https://owlcation.com/humanities/When-the-Native-American-Indians-first-met-the-European-Settlers>

## Investigation: Traditional Korean Society

Important Action Patterns are usually based on deep-seated beliefs and values. Consider the following:<sup>1</sup>

### **Traditional Korean funeral of an elder:**

A low table with a bowl of uncooked rice on it is placed before the main gate of the house in which a death has occurred. It is to keep out the evil spirits which want to take the place of the soul in the body of the dead.

The body is placed in the coffin, which is placed on blocks in the main heated-floor room (*an pang*) of the house.

The sons and other relatives (up to second cousin) of the deceased greet the mourners and are expected to wail with an unrestrained show of grief, repeating five times a customary Korean exclamation for pain, “A-i-gu, a-i-gu, a-i-gu, a-i-gu, a-i-gu.” Others in the room respond with “O-I, o-I, o-i.”

Visitors first enter the room and bow deeply to the spirit of the soul that still remains with the corpse. Men make two deep *kow-tows*, each preceded by the circular movement of the joined hands known as the *up*.

The chief mourner may wear a wide wicker hat, like a shallow basket about two feet in diameter. This hat, worn mainly in summer, keeps most of the upper part of his face in shadow. It symbolizes the shame the son feels at allowing the parent to die, which makes him hide his face from heaven. He also carries a staff of paulownia wood if he is mourning for his mother, or of bamboo if for his father.

After bowing to the soul at the coffin, the mourners go outside and bow once more to the sons and other close relatives. They may say some words of sympathy. Then, they go to help with the meal or funeral preparations or to visit with other mourners.

### **A Child's Burial:**

If a child dies, no funeral is held. The father simply puts the body in a straw bag, and possibly accompanied by one or two male relatives or other men, buries it in some isolated place with no ceremony.

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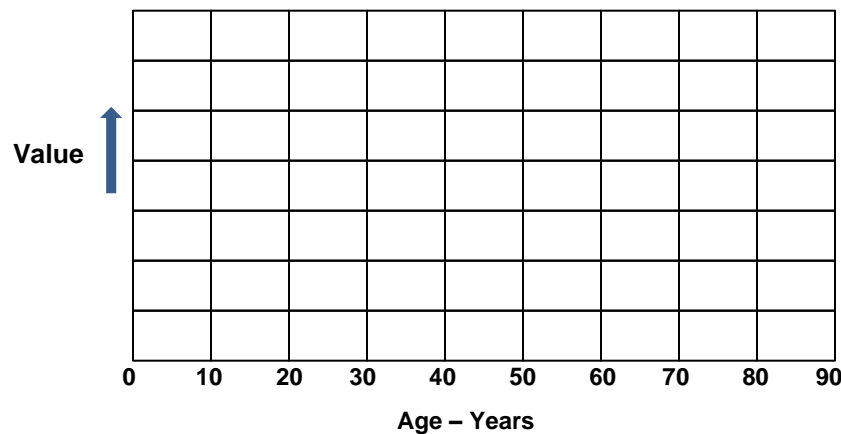
<sup>1</sup>Brady, Marion and Howard Brady, *Idea and Action in World Cultures*, 1977, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall Inc., p. 160. Material supplied by William J. Biernatzki, S.J., Ph. D.

I was interviewing a young Korean who was smoking. I noticed that he put out the cigarette whenever his grandfather entered the room. He relit it only when the old man left again.

Later, I asked the same young man where a certain relative lived. The young man asked his grandfather. The old man replied that it was a certain village in a certain township. When I located the village on a map, I mentioned that it was in a different township than the old man had given.

The young Korean answered, “The map must be wrong. My grandfather knows about such things.”

***In your journal, make a graph similar to the one below, but larger:***



***On the graph, draw a line representing what seem to be Korean beliefs about the value of the individual at each age.***

***Draw a second line representing your own view of individual value. You may feel it's necessary to draw two lines—one for males, one for females.***

***Summarize the traditional Korean Action Patterns and the shared idea you've identified. Then summarize the contrasting patterns and idea from your own society.***

Korean village ►



[http://www.transitionsabroad.com/publications/magazine/0409/teaching\\_english\\_in\\_south\\_korea.shtml](http://www.transitionsabroad.com/publications/magazine/0409/teaching_english_in_south_korea.shtml)

## Investigation: Colonial Virginia Society

Differences in ways of acting usually mean difference in ways of thinking. As you've seen, Korean burial practices suggest they believe that, initially, individuals have relatively little worth at birth, becoming more human and therefore valuable as they experience life. This belief contrasts with the views of most people in Western societies.

***Below is an excerpt from the autobiography of Devereaux Jarratt, a minister in colonial Virginia.<sup>1</sup> Find and list differences between his society's ideas and actions and those of your own society:***

I was born in New Kent, a county in Virginia, about 25 miles below Richmond, on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 1732.

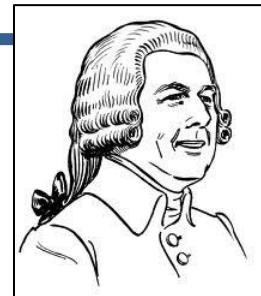
My father was brought up to the trade of a carpenter, at which he worked until the very day before he died. He was a mild, polite man, and much respected among his neighbors. None of my ancestors, on either side, were either rich or great. My parents always had plenty of plain food and clothes, wholesome and good, suitable to their humble position and the times in which they lived. All of our food was the product of our little farm; our clothes were made by my mother, except our hats and shoes. We only wore our shoes in the winter season.

We made no use of tea or coffee for breakfast, or at any other time. I did not know a single family that used them. Meat, bread and milk were the foods which we ate. I suppose rich people made use of coffee and tea, but I had no way of finding out about the lives of the rich.

We always looked on what were called *gentle folk* as people of a different and higher kind. I was quite shy of them, and kept off at a humble distance. A periwig, in those days, was a symbol that the person was one of the gentle folk. When I saw a man riding the road near our house with a wig on, I would be alarmed and afraid. It would give me such a disagreeable feeling that I would run off and hide as if my life was in danger. Such ideas of the difference between gentle and simple folk were held by everyone I knew near my own age.

<http://the-penultimate-word.com/2013/11/24/peruke-a-mans-wig-particularly-from-the-17th-and-18th-centuries/>

***In your opinion, would the ideas of the “gentlemen” who wore wigs have been more like those of Jarratt or more like your own?***



<sup>1</sup>Adapted from “The Autobiography of the Reverend Devereaux Jarratt, 1732-1768,” Douglass Adair, ed. *William and Mary Quarterly IX*, July 1952 (Williamsburg, Va., Institute of Early American History and Culture), pp. 360-371.

## Investigation: Societies in the Target Area

If your Target Area (school, neighborhood, etc.) is typical, it includes people with a variety of family backgrounds, with parents or grandparents from other societies.



**1: Identify those in your Target Area whose parents or grandparents grew up in societies different from your own, and list those societies.**

**2: Interview at least one person from a society unlike your own, and identify ideas, beliefs and ways of acting that differ from yours. Be prepared with questions such as:**

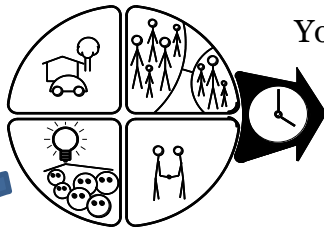
- What did you think was strange when you came here?
- What ideas, beliefs or ways of acting do you think were better where you came from?
- What ideas, beliefs or ways of acting do you think are better here than where you came from?



<http://www1.nyc.gov/site/immigrants/help/city-services.page>

## Shared Ideas—a Closer Look

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You've learned that members of groups share important ideas, values, beliefs and assumptions, and that these ideas must be inferred from what group members say and do. Important Action Patterns are generally motivated by Shared Ideas.

### **Important subcategories of Shared Ideas include beliefs and assumptions about:**

- The basic nature of humans: Are people considered “naturally” good, evil or neither? What’s the relative value of people of various ages? Of males and females?
- Time: Is the past different from the present? If so, how? Will the future probably be better, worse, or about the same?
- “The good life:” What do people want their children to be, do, and have when they become adults?
- Ownership: What are rules for owning? What does “owning” mean? What things should be owned by individuals, and what by groups? What kinds of things are owned? How is ownership transferred?
- Acceptable action: What are important things it’s not OK to do?
- Authority: Who should make important decisions affecting many people? How do officials get their power? How is it transferred to others?
- Status: Who’s considered important? Not important? Why? What can people “do” with high status or prestige?
- Causality: Why do things happen? What causes events, disasters, change?
- Outsiders: Who’s considered “them” and “not one of us?” Why?

As you think through your investigations, you may choose to add other categories to this list.



## Investigation: Native American Societies

Below are excerpts from speeches and documents from members of various Native American tribal groups. **Study them. When you think you've identified an idea, belief or value that differs from one held by most people you know, write it down in your journal. (e.g. The Nez Perce believe that \_\_\_\_\_). Follow it with a statement summarizing beliefs of people you know.**

**Use the categories of Shared Ideas given on Page 7 to classify the ideas you identify. (You might have to add new categories.)**

*Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce tribe:*

“The earth was created by the assistance of the sun, and it should be left as it was. . . . The country was made without lines of demarcation, and it is no man's business to divide it. . . . I see the whites all over the country gaining wealth, and see their desire to give us lands which are worthless. . . . I never said the land was mine to do with as I chose. The one who has the right to dispose of it is the one who has created it.”

*Walking Buffalo, a Stoney Indian, in about 1930:*

“We saw the Great Spirit's work in almost everything: sun, moon, trees, wind, and mountains. Sometimes we approached him through these things. Was that so bad? I think we have a true belief in the Supreme Being, a stronger faith than that of most whites who have called us pagans. . . . Indians living close to nature and nature's ruler are not living in darkness.” “Did you know that trees talk? Well, they do. They talk to each other, and they'll talk to you if you listen. Trouble is, white people don't listen. They never learned to listen to the Indians so I don't suppose they'll listen to other voices in nature. But I have learned a lot from trees: sometimes about the weather, sometimes about animals, sometimes about the Great Spirit.”

*A statement by Smohalla, a Sokulk, in about 1850:*

“My young men shall never work. Men who work cannot dream; and wisdom comes to us in dreams.” “You ask me to plow the ground. Shall I take a knife and tear my mother's breast? Then when I die she will not take me to her bosom to rest.” “You ask me to dig for stone. Shall I dig under her skin for her bones? Then when I die I cannot enter her body to be born again.” “You ask me to cut grass and make hay and sell it and be rich like white men. But how dare I cut off my mother's hair?”

(Continued)

*An old Wintu (northern California) holy woman:*

“The white people never cared for land or deer or bear. When we Indians kill meat, we eat it all up. When we dig roots we make little holes. When we build houses, we make little holes. When we burn grass for grasshoppers, we don't ruin things. We shake down acorns and pinenuts. We don't chop down trees. We only use dead wood. But the White people plow up the ground, pull down the trees, kill everything. The tree says, ‘Don't. I am sore. Don't hurt me.’ But they chop it down and cut it up. The spirit of the land hates them. . . . How can the spirit of the earth like the White man? . . . Everywhere the White man has touched it, it is sore.”

*Excerpt from the 1854 address by Chief Seattle of the Dwamish tribe upon giving up the land upon which the city of Seattle, Washington now stands:*

“Your dead cease to love you and the land of their nativity as soon as they pass the portals of the tomb and wander away beyond the stars. They are soon forgotten and never return. Our dead never forget the beautiful world that gave them being. . . .”  
“When the last Red Man shall have perished, and the memory of my tribe shall have become a myth among the white man, these shores will swarm with the invisible dead of my tribe, and when your children's children think themselves alone in the field, the store, the shop, or in the silence of the pathless woods, they will not be alone. . . . At night when the streets of your cities and villages are silent and you think them deserted, they will throng with the returning hosts that once filled them and still love this beautiful land.”

Differences in Shared Ideas between Native Americans and people that came from Europe led to differences in Action Patterns. ***How would North America be different if the Native ideas had been accepted by European immigrants?***

From Catlin's  
*North American  
Indians*



[http://library.furman.edu/specialcollections/usa/am\\_indian\\_resources.htm](http://library.furman.edu/specialcollections/usa/am_indian_resources.htm)

## Investigation: Traditional Afghan Society

Below is a statement from a traditional man from Afghanistan.<sup>1</sup>

**Identify an idea, belief or value that differs from one held by most people you know. Summarize both views in your journal.**

“Everything I need to know to lead the good life and prepare for the life hereafter has been known for centuries. In his compassion for man, God has provided in the Koran a guide which is both complete and final. It does not make life hard for men, by telling them what they do not need to know or cannot understand. Neither does it omit the answers to any questions man might need to ask. All knowledge is to be revered, but the knowledge which has been given by God is infinitely more worthy than any knowledge man discovers, even as the Giver is infinitely more worthy than man.”

**In your journal, explain how this traditional Afghan is likely to feel about:**

- University professors and scientists
- Laws and courts set up by the government
- A natural disaster in Afghanistan, such as a drought
- Outsiders who move to Afghanistan with non-Afghan Action Patterns.

## Investigation: Puritan Society Beliefs and Assumptions

Sometime before 1690, a Boston man named Benjamin Harris put together *The New England Primer*. For about 150 years, The Primer was the most widely used textbook in New England. Puritan children used it to learn the alphabet, but the Primer also tried to teach a few “big” ideas, such as what God was like, why people should behave, the purpose of life, and so on.



On the next page are several of the little verses for various letters of the alphabet children were expected to memorize.

**Work with others, and do a “content analysis” of the verses, to classify them by the Shared Ideas they contain. For example, what similar idea is suggested in verses for G, R, T, X and Y? What other verses suggest other similar ideas? Record your conclusions in your journal.**

**After you complete your analysis, match the ideas you’ve found with the categories on Page 7.**

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<sup>1</sup>Adapted from Teter, Park, “Let Them Eat Cake, A Look at Peace Corps Cultural Training,” (PC/Evaluation, October 1968) p. II, 55.

A		In <i>Adam's</i> Fall We sinned all.
B		Thy Life to Mend This <i>Book</i> Attend.
C		The <i>Cat</i> doth play And after slay.
D		A <i>Dog</i> will bite A <i>Thief</i> at night.
E		An <i>Eagle's</i> flight Is out of fight.
F		The Idle <i>Fool</i> Is whipt at School.
G		As runs the <i>Glass</i> Mans life doth pass.
H		My <i>Book</i> and <i>Heart</i> Shall never part.
K		Our <i>KING</i> the good No man of blood.
L		The <i>Lion</i> bold The <i>Lamb</i> doth hold.
M		The <i>Moon</i> gives light In time of night.
N		<i>Nightingales</i> sing In Time of Spring.

In *Adam's* fall  
We sinned all.

Thy life to mend  
This *Book* Attend.

The *Cat* doth play  
And after slay.

The idle *Fool*  
Is whipt at school.

As runs the *Glass*  
Man's life doth pass.

My book and *Heart*  
Shall never part.

*Job* feels the rod  
Yet blesses God.

*Kings* should be  
good;  
Not men of blood.

Young *Obadiah*,  
David, Josias,  
All were pious.

*Queen Esther* sues,  
And saves the Jews.

*Rachel* doth mourn  
For her first-born.

*Samuel* anoints  
Who God appoints.

*Time* cuts down all  
Both great and small.

*Uriah's* beautiful wife  
Made David seek his  
life.

*Whales* in the sea  
God's voice obey.

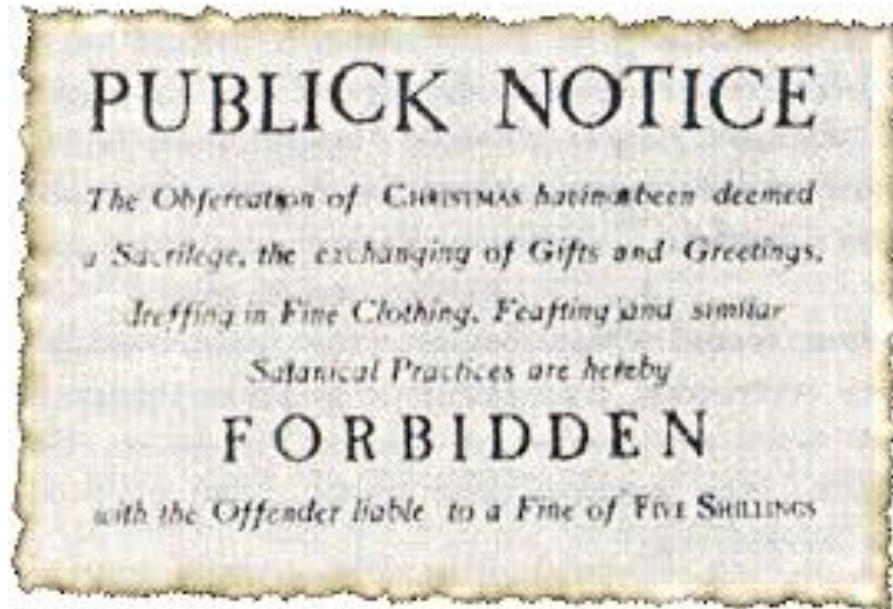
*Xerxes* the great did  
die,  
And so must you and I.

*Youth* forward slips,  
Death soonest nips.

*Zaccheus* he  
Did climb the tree  
His Lord to see.

**Note:** Many of the Primer's verses refer to stories in "the Book" (meaning the Bible.) For example, "Job feels the rod, yet blesses God." You might find it interesting to look up some of the names and learn their stories.

Below: From Puritan Boston, 1659: “PUBLICK NOTICE The Observation of Christmas having been deemed a Sacrilege, the exchanging of Gifts and Greetings, dressing in Fine Clothing, Feasting and similar Satanical Practices are hereby FORBIDDEN with the Offender liable to a Fine of Five Shillings.”



<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/formerlyfundie/the-fundamentalist-war-on-christmas/>

### Investigation: Immigrant Ideas

When members of different societies meet, their first reactions are likely to be based on appearance--differences in skin color, clothing, or ways of speaking. Eventually, those become less important than differences in beliefs and values.

This was true of immigrants to America coming from many different societies and sub-societies. The material that follows suggests some of the ideas and ways of acting that immigrants brought with them.

***Make two columns in your journal, one for immigrant ideas different from those of present-day Americans, and one for ideas shared by most people today. Read each of the data pieces, and list the ideas that fit in each column.***

Example A:<sup>1</sup>

(Photo: <http://macaulay.cuny.edu/eportfolios/peopling2013italian/history/>)

In Italy I live in small town—six, seven thousand. It take not much money to live. We pay the rent once a year, only little money. We have fine garden, we live healthy, happy. I obey my mother's word, which is like the God. The people in my town, they are serious, human, good heart. We give everything to the poor. When stranger comes to us, he got always the first chair; we make all we could for him. The stranger can stay a year; he needs no money to pay for anything.

We work little bit, then we take the leisure. We love very much the music, art, poetry. We love the poetical life—poetry today, and tomorrow we take what's coming with the good patience. The way I mean is not only to read the books of the great poets—of Dante that we love more than a father, or Petrarch—but the poetry of the beautiful scenery in the country, the poetry of music, the poetry of friendship. Even in the small town we have band and orchestra.

Italian immigrants arrive at  
Ellis Island, New York ▼



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<sup>1</sup> Emily F. Robbins, "If One Speak Bad of Your Mother, How You Feel?," *Red Cross Magazine*, September 1919.

### Example B:<sup>1</sup>

November 11, 1902

Dearest Parents,

Please do not be angry with me for what I shall write. I write you that it is hard to live alone, so please find some girl for me. Be sure she is an honest one, for in America there is not even one single honest Polish girl.

December 21, 1902

Dearest Parents,

I thank you kindly for your letter, for it was happy. As to the girl, although I don't know her, a friend of mine who does says that she is stately and pretty. I believe him, as well as you, my parents. Please tell me which of the sisters is to come, the older or the younger one, Aleksandra or Stanislaw.

### Example C:<sup>2</sup>

When I was five years old I began to go to *cheder*. Such was my diligence that I went through the *siddur* and the Pentateuch in one winter. At six and a half, my father brought me into the famous *yeshiva* of Vilna.

The sole source of maintenance for almost all the pupils was the system of “day eating,” at the homes of some well-to-do or poorer members of the community—at a different home each day. As a rule, the *baburim* are not residents of the city where the *yeshiva* is situated. To maintain them, each is assigned to eat one day in the week in certain houses; he thus rotates through seven houses a week.

### Painting by Elena Flerova: “Cheder”

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/574209021213897272/>

*Cheder*: Jewish primary school

*Siddur*: Jewish prayer book

*Pentateuch*: Scripture, the five books of Moses, beginning with Genesis also called *Torah*

*Yeshiva*: Jewish upper school that focuses on study of the main Jewish scriptures and commentary.

*Baburim*: Young male students



<sup>1</sup> Thomas and Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (New York: Octagon Books, 1971) v. ii, p. 259.

<sup>2</sup> Eliakum Zunser, *A Jewish Bard*, 1905.

#### Example D:<sup>1</sup>

I am a son of a Polish peasant farmer. Until ten years of age I did not know the alphabet, or, exactly speaking, I knew only the letter B. Father did not send me to school. He was always repeating: “We have grown old, and we can’t read nor write, and we live; so you, my children, will also live without knowledge.”

I said to my father that I wanted to learn from a book. And father scolded me, “And who will peel potatoes in the winter, and pasture the geese in summer?” I cried. Once, while peeling potatoes, I escaped from my father and went to an old man who knew not only how to read, but how to write well. I asked him to show me letters in the printer, and he did not refuse. I went home and thought: “It is bad! Father will probably give me a licking.” And so it was. Father showered a few strokes on me and said: “Don't you know that, as old people say, he who knows written stuff casts himself into hell?” But I used to steal out to learn more and more frequently.

#### Example E:<sup>2</sup>

For the peasant, arson is a way of getting even, and does not bring dishonor in the eyes of one's neighbors.

A peasant whom my father scolded for having set fire to his neighbor's buildings said, “I have set fire to his barn, but he could have and still can set fire to mine.” I have listened to the stories of many perfectly respectable farmers who tried to set fire to their enemies' farm buildings.

#### Example F:<sup>3</sup>

The people believe that it is the Tsar's responsibility to govern them, and that he has no need of advice from the people. They believe that the Tsar thinks about them all the time, not even sleeping at night out of concern for them. They believe the Tsar should govern alone, for that is not only his right, it is his heavy burden to bear.

Occasionally in the past the Tsar has asked the people's advice, but when he has the people have said, “This is what we think, but do what you believe is best.”

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<sup>1</sup> *Gazeta Swiateczna*, Vol. 18, No. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas and Znaniecki, op. cit, v. iv., p. 119.

<sup>3</sup> N. M. Pavlov, *Stenographic Report of the Peterhof Conference*, 1905.



## Investigation: Summarizing Ideas of Target Area People

Sometimes a single shared idea creates vast patterns in a society. For example, many North Americans believe:

It's good to be young. The best years of most people's lives are between the ages of 18 and 35 or so.



As the “baby boomers” get older, this idea is changing, but it still results in billions of dollars being spent on cosmetics, surgery, and physical conditioning. Advertisements show happy people in the “ideal” age range, or acting like people in the ideal age range.

Besides this idea, there are others many Americans share—ideas that create large, important Action Patterns. (Most people who study the “character” of people come up with between six and a dozen or so main ideas for each society.)

**List the main pattern-forming ideas for your Target Area.** Check the idea categories (p. 7), and look at contrasting ideas of other societies for clues to what's important.

Other clues will be indicated by your answers to a few questions:

- What situations sometimes make people in your Target Area angry? What shared idea or ideas are being violated in these situations?
- What motivates individuals to spend a lot of money? What motivates the group that built, staffed and maintains your Target Area?
- When people are faced with major problems, who or what do they believe is the cause? How do they try to solve the problem?

The direct answers to the questions may not be “deep” enough to show a really fundamental shared idea. **Check each answer by asking yourself “why?” then “the ‘why’ for the ‘why,’” to see if you can get an even deeper idea or belief.**

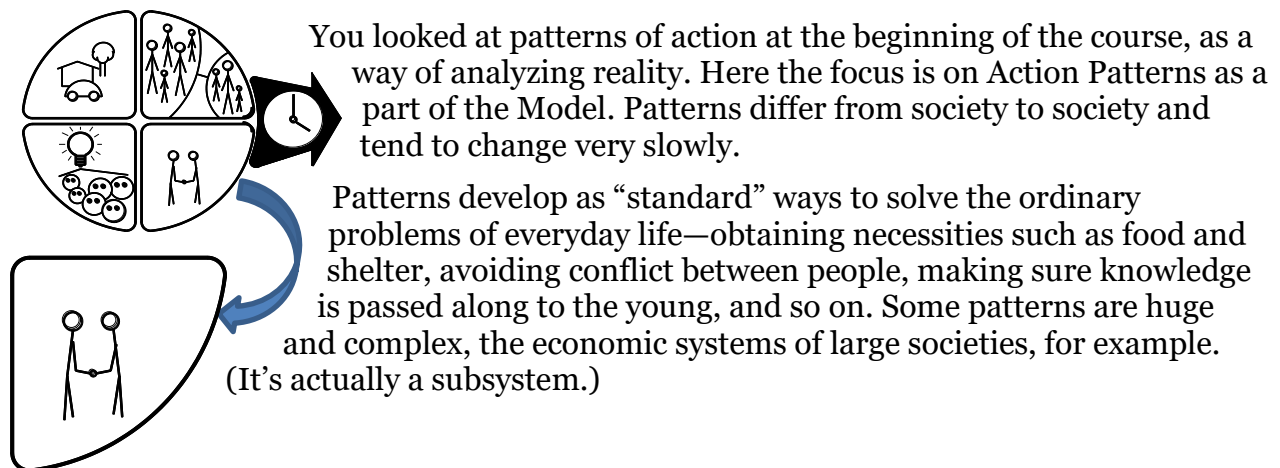
### Why Study Societies?

**If your main interest is chemistry or music or some other field, an emphasis on the study of societies may be frustrating. But consider: Everything you think and do, now and in the future—every emotion you feel, every problem you face, every success or failure--will be shaped by the ideas, beliefs, and values of the society of which you're a part.**

**“Know thyself,” said the ancient Greeks. Nothing you can know is more important.**

## Action Patterns—a Closer Look

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### Some important sub-categories—Action Patterns for:

- Work (Who does what kind of work? With whom? When? Where?)
- Exchanging goods and services (trading, buying, selling, etc.—the *economic* subsystem)
- Teaching the young. This may include both formal education (such as school) and informal learning (such as learning from other children and from watching adults)—the *socialization* subsystem
- Controlling behavior considered wrong, including mild controls (e.g. shaming or loss of privileges), moderate controls (e.g. fines), and control and punishment by police, courts, and prisons
- Making important group decisions (the *political* subsystem)
- Religious practices.

Some of pattern categories overlap. For example, patterns for work closely relate to economic subsystems, teaching the young is part of controlling behavior, and political subsystems establish laws that also deal with wrong behavior.

This list could be very long. Other patterns are associated with greeting, marriage, birth, death, dealing with nature, establishing how time is used, and so on.

## Investigation: Patterns of Conversation

Patterns that ordinarily aren't important can become important when people from two different societies meet. Consider, for example, the traditional conversational patterns followed in one part of the world:<sup>1</sup>

In some Arab countries, the proper and polite distance for a conversation is close enough to feel the other person's breath. Also, Arab men tend to express their feelings openly and think it's important to act out emotions. Men may weep, shout, or gesture expressively. Arabs feel that a man who doesn't show emotion isn't being sincere.

Among men, the proper tone of conversation between equals is loud—a near shout. A soft tone indicates that the person speaking is weak and cannot be trusted or believed. In conversations between non-equals, however, the pattern is different. Many Arabs show respect to a sheik (or a rich foreigner) by lowering their voice and mumbling. The louder an important person speaks, the more quietly the humbler Arab tends to speak.

***Act out a conversation between two traditional Arabic men: a shopkeeper and someone who thinks the shopkeeper's prices are too high. How does acting out this conversation make you feel?***

***Act out a conversation between an Arabic man and a rich foreign male, neither of whom understands the other's patterns. How might each feel about the other after the conversation?***

***Record your observations and conclusions in your journal.***



<http://tribune.com.pk/story/745015/saudi-men-banned-from-marrying-pakistani-women/>

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<sup>1</sup>Edward T. Hall and William Foote Whyte, "Intercultural Communication: A Guide for Men of Action" (*Human Organization*, Vol., 19, No. 1, 1960, pp. 5-12), p. 5, available at [http://spiritualityandculture.com/uploads/Intercultural\\_Communication\\_by\\_Hall.pdf](http://spiritualityandculture.com/uploads/Intercultural_Communication_by_Hall.pdf).

## Investigation: Native Americans and English Colonists

In 1744, Maryland and Virginia officials made an offer to nearby Native American leaders. The next day, they received a counter offer (data box below) from the leaders, who were heads of the “Six Nations” society. Obviously, the colonists and the natives had very different ideas about how to educate boys.

We know that you highly esteem the kind of learning taught in those Colleges, and that the Maintenance of our young Men, while with you, could be very expensive to you. We are convinced that you mean to us Good by your Proposal; and we thank you heartily. But you, who are wise must know that different Nations have different Conceptions of things and you will therefore not take it amiss, if our Ideas of this kind of Education happen not to be the same as yours. We have had some Experience of it. Several of our young People were formerly brought up at the Colleges of the Northern Provinces: they were instructed in all your Sciences; but when they came back to us, they were bad Runners, ignorant of every means of living in the woods...neither fit for Hunters, Warriors, nor Counsellors, they were totally good for nothing.

We are, however, not the less oblig'd by your kind offer, tho' we decline accepting it; and, to show our grateful Sense of it, if the Gentlemen of Virginia will send us a Dozen of their Sons, we will take Care of the Education, instruct them in all we know, and make Men of them.

Benjamin Franklin commented on this subject:<sup>1</sup>

“When an Indian child has been brought up among us, taught our language and habituated to our customs, yet if he goes to see his relations and makes one Indian ramble with them, there is no persuading him ever to return. [But] when white persons of either sex have been taken prisoners young by the Indians, and lived a while among them, tho' ransomed by their friends, and treated with all imaginable tenderness to prevail with them to stay among the English, yet in a short time they become disgusted with our manner of life, and the care and pains that are necessary to support it, and take the first good opportunity of escaping again into the woods, from whence there is no reclaiming them.” Franklin added (1782):

“...thousands of Europeans are Indians, and we have no examples of even one of those Aborigines having from choice become Europeans!”

***Create two columns in your journal, one for “English Colonists” and the other for “Six Nations.” List the probable differences in the actual teaching patterns used by each group. (The patterns aren’t explicitly stated in the data. You’ll have to infer them.)***

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<sup>1</sup> <http://wereallrelative.com/2014/04/05/the-puzzling-white-indians-who-loved-their-abductors/>

## Investigation: Problems with Action Patterns

An American Peace Corps volunteer assigned to work in Southeast Asia told this story:

Not long after I arrived in the village, I thought of a way to save the women both time and hard work. All the fresh water used in the village came from a spring about a half-mile up the side of the mountain. Twice each day groups of village women gathered in the center of the village, carrying their clay pots. After all of them arrived, they climbed up the mountain and fill the pots with water. Then they carefully carried them back down the narrow, stony path to the village.

So, I collected bamboo poles, which I turned into pipe by knocking out the partitions between joints, and joined them end-to-end. I laid the pipe so it passed each home, and added valves whittled out of wood. I ran the bamboo pipes up the mountain and into the spring.

The fresh-water system worked just as it was supposed to work. The only trouble was, the women kept right on climbing the mountain together and carrying water down in their clay pots.

I followed the women up the mountain and watched their activities, and it finally dawned on me what I'd done wrong. So I went back and changed my water system so it emptied into a large barrel outside the village. Then it was a success.

***In your journal, explain the relationship between patterns and this volunteer's failure and success.***

Differences in cultural patterns between people often lead to difficulties such as the Peace Corps volunteer experienced. For example, one of the authors was in India few years ago, helping sell some communications equipment. He found that one pattern of some Indian people, when listening to another person, is to rotate his or her head slowly back and forth, first a bit to the left, then a bit to the right. This means "I am hearing what you are saying."

***Explain why this might be a problem for an American talking to an Indian.*** (You might find it helpful to act out this situation.)

## Investigation: Local Government

Government is all about patterns—standard ways of solving problems that occur when people live and work in the same general area.

- 1:** *From a local phone or other directory, find the listing of departments and officials for the local government that's most important to you—probably that of your town or city.*
- 2:** *From that directory, make your own list of the various departments and functions within the local government.*
- 3:** *If you don't know what a department or official does, find out. For each major department or official, write a brief paragraph describing the Action Patterns and their purposes. Identify possible problems being solved. If possible, illustrate each main pattern with photographs and/or diagrams.*
- 4:** *Identify action pattern sub-categories (p. 18) important in the local government (e.g. decision-making). Organize the information you've collected to show systemic relationships.*
- 5:** *Identify problems you think should be solved by local government, but aren't—or are solved inadequately.*



## Investigation: Possible Pattern Changes in Your Target Area

What might be little-noticed but important long-term changes in your society of each of the following pattern changes in formal schooling?

***Discuss these possibilities with others, and (in your journal) hypothesize about possible effects.***

- Segregation by gender
- Classes of fifteen students each, all ages mixed
- Parents rotating weekly as teachers
- All classes held in auditoriums, with about 200 people in each class
- Home schooling of most young people, with groups of families combining to share facilities and responsibilities
- All schooling done via computer—no textbooks, no teachers, just people monitoring your computer use to make sure you were working.



## Investigation: Target Area Cost Analysis

***Working with others, make a reasonably-accurate approximation of the cost of getting everybody in your classroom to and from your school today.***



## Investigation: Local Sub-Societies

- 1:** *Use the Model to analyze groups of people in your town, city or region that differ from others. Some of these might be called “sub-societies.”* Not all of them will have formal or proper names. Sometimes they’ll simply be “those people,” or “them,” (as in a mother’s comment, “I’d rather you didn’t hang out with *them*”).

Some obvious differences will be relatively superficial, such as differences in:

- words, phrases or slang used frequently
- clothing types and brands worn
- favorite radio stations and types of music
- breeds of dogs preferred as pets
- makes and models of vehicles admired
- stores patronized
- clubs preferred
- sports engaged in
- foods eaten, and meal times
- occupations preferred
- television shows watched
- political and/or religious affiliation
- (and so on)



- 2:** *Add to the list using examples from your own experience. Then, for each item, identify specific local differences between the main or dominant society and the sub-society. (In the area where the authors live, one sub-society prefers tennis and SUVs, another prefers hunting and pickup trucks.)*
- 3:** *In your journal, draw a rough map of your town, city, or region and locate sub-societies within it.*
- 4:** *Do each of the groups you’ve identified differ from the dominant society only a little, or a lot? Explain.*
- 5:** *Is identifying patterns shared by a group “stereotyping?” Why or why not? Explain in your journal. (Check the definition of “stereotype” for some help here.)*
- 6:** As we pointed out, differences between the dominant society and sub-societies such as those above tend to be rather superficial. ***Speculate about more significant differences in local sub-societies.***



## For Teacher/Mentor:

The intimate relationship between the Model categories “Action Patterns” and “Shared Ideas” makes it difficult to investigate either one alone. Sometimes speakers reveal their important Shared Ideas rather clearly. More often, shared states of mind or worldviews are taken for granted and remain unexamined by those who hold them, and must be inferred by looking at Action Patterns. Deep-seated values may not show up until they are challenged by outsiders acting with different values, leading to conflict.

For more background on this, and much more related to societies and systems, by all means read <http://www.carrollquigley.net/Articles/Needed-A-Revolution-in-Thinking.htm>. This article concisely summarizes our point of view.

As we’ve said, the primary sources we use for analyzing and comparing ways of thinking and acting are vehicles for transmitting concepts. Culture-specific details in the data drawn for different societies shouldn’t be considered information to be stored in memory or tested. What’s important is raising learner awareness of general ideas—why humans act as they do, and why the relationships between societies are complex and often suffer from misunderstandings.

### ***Investigation: Traditional Korean Society***

Learners’ comparisons of Korean patterns with their own is the main point of the first investigation and those that follow. Learners see their own society more clearly when it’s compared to others.

Anthropologist Biernatzki’s jarring description of the differing Korean patterns following the deaths of an elder and a child was probably more effective than any other single data piece given to us by consulting anthropologists for our earlier world cultures book, evoking strong reactions from kids who read it.

Formal status distinctions, many of them related to age, are far more important in Korean society than in American society.

To complete the investigation, learners start thinking about and discussing their own beliefs about human value vs. age. Some learners may have grown up in families that differ significantly from the typical Western middle-class views about this subject; if so, they can be valuable instructional assets. On average, Americans tend to value individuals fairly high at birth; this value peaks somewhere between 20 and 40, then begins a decline. Extreme old age will probably be significantly devalued by some learners.

### ***Investigation: Colonial Virginia Society***

Eighteenth century Virginia mirrored society in England, in a somewhat simplified way. British aristocrats of every degree, men and women, wore wigs powdered with finely ground starch, and the “gentlemen” of Virginia society followed suit. The presence of slaves in Virginia at the time led to three distinct, widely separated social classes. The status differences between the gentle class and white laborers is evident in the data. The egalitarian ideal in present-day

American society is a commonly-shared value, although at odds with the present polarization of wealth.

### ***Investigation: Societies in the Target Area***

Smartphones have apps that enable them be used as voice recorders. Recording will improve the accuracy of information gathered. Information collected should be shared, clearly and accurately.

### ***Investigation: Native American Societies***

One of our American History units, “Native Americans, 1840-1900,” accessible at <http://www.marionbrady.com/americanhistory/NativeAmericans.pdf>, contains additional data for exploring the ideas and attitudes of both Native Americans and White pioneer settlers on the Great Plains. The differences were extreme. That Native American material may be used, if desired, to augment the information in this Part of *IS*.

### ***Investigation: Traditional Afghan Society***

The potential problem with this may be the negative attitudes some learners may have toward Muslims, so care must be taken. A more balanced view of moderate Islam, with its concern for compassion and charity, may be necessary to offset stereotyped views.

### ***Investigation: Puritan Society Beliefs and Assumptions***

Puritan ideas about the sinful nature of humans, and the ever-present threat of death permeate the New England Primer. The Primer was also one source of the bedtime prayer familiar to many: “Now I lay me down to sleep...If I should die before I wake...”

### ***Investigation: Immigrant Ideas***

The relevant question is, “How do the ideas expressed here differ from those of most people in the dominant society?” For younger learners, working in groups to discuss each source will help ensure success in interpreting the materials.

### ***Investigation: Summarizing Ideas of Target Area People***

This investigation is a bit difficult, but it’s likely that by this time work teams will have developed effective methods for attacking investigations like this one. The central thrust is the relationships between Shared Ideas in the larger society and the existence and operation of the Target Area. Moving beyond individual to shared motivation is one key to this, e.g.:

If the Target Area is a school, why was it built? Yes, to educate young people, but why educate young people?

Besides making money in a job, what other reasons for educating are important?

Why does the school have a gymnasium? Yes, for exercise and sports, but why exercise? Why have games?

Why is it surrounded by roads and streets? Yes, so people can arrive in vehicles, but why use vehicles? Yes, they save time, but why is that important?

Proceeding in this “dig deeper” process will uncover basic Shared Ideas and values.

### ***Investigation: Patterns of Conversation***

This activity is a change of pace. It was included in the earlier World Cultures textbook, and frequently resulted in successful and memorable simulations of cross-cultural patterns.

### ***Investigation: Native Americans and English Colonists***

This is a quick but fascinating look at differences in societies.

### ***Investigation: Problems with Action Patterns***

Humans tend to turn functional patterns (getting water, eating meals) into social patterns, and the social element can become more important than meeting the need that gave rise to it. The example cited here also points up the tendency to oversimplify problem solving.

### ***Investigation: Local Government***

This activity could involve learners in significant data gathering from local agencies. Identifying the extent of the responsibilities of the local government can be an eye-opener: streets, traffic lights, streetlights, sidewalks, bridges, drainage, water supply, sewage disposal, building code enforcement, fire protection, police protection, courts, growth management, public transportation, tax collection, parks and recreation, perhaps schools and health services, administration and more. Organizing the information can occupy work teams for days. Done with adequate detail, this can be a powerful civics lesson.

### ***Investigation: Possible Pattern Changes in Your Target Area***

An exercise in hypothesizing.

### ***Investigation: Target Area Cost Analysis***

Cost analysis is difficult but important, and this seemingly-simple activity is a really challenging project. However, the thinking involved in this makes it important and beneficial to learners. (Those working with learners who are not part of conventional classrooms will need to modify this to fit the learning situation, but it’s important enough that it should be done some way, if at all possible.)

Learners working on this task will soon realize that they need to answer a long list of ancillary questions. The investigation’s first step is to generate those questions, such as:

How many arrived by school bus? What does a bus cost? How long does it last—for how many miles? What are fuel and maintenance costs per mile? Does the bus make more than two trips per day, or serve more than one

school? How can the average cost per student attending the school be computed? (Do school authorities have the information available? If not, why not?)

How many arrived by private car? How many miles were driven? What percentage of the car's total use does this represent? What's the average cost per mile to operate a car, including vehicle cost, insurance, fuel, maintenance, and so on? Are there costs associated with the time used by the driver? What do roads, streets, and parking lots cost?

How many people walked to school? With what associated costs—for example, for sidewalks, crossing guards, and cars waiting with idling engines?

If students arrived by public transport such as a city bus system, similar questions should be generated. For example: Does the fare cover the cost of transportation, or is public transport subsidized by taxes? How does the cost of fuel affect the pattern?

Cost computations barely begin a list of possibilities. For example, if students arrive by private automobile, is that their only option? If there's a choice, what values shared by parents or students motivate them to choose to arrive by car instead of, say, by school bus or on foot? What changes are occurring in the patterns associated with transporting students? Why?

Working to solve these kinds of puzzles, learners give thought to a great deal of practical math, statistical analysis, economics, sociology, and other fields of study. Just the first step—developing a list of questions that must be answered—requires a great deal of thought. And, of course, questions invariably generate more questions.

The familiarity of the everyday and the mundane hides inherent complexity. As study proceeds, the familiar gradually becomes “strange enough to see,” radically broadening learner perspectives, chipping away at the lack of awareness and the superficiality of understanding that contribute to and intensify real-world problems.

### ***Investigation: Local Sub-Societies***

The chances are that any group of learners will have members of different subcultures or sub-societies, including those associated with race. This is a potential source of friction, so make sure groups discuss stereotyping and its problems, and avoid disrespecting those who differ.

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