Emerging Globalities and Civilizational Perspectives

Jonathan H. Turner
Anthony J. Roberts

# Inter-Societal Dynamics

## Toward a General Theory

Springer

# Emerging Globalities and Civilizational Perspectives

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This series documents the range of emerging globalities in the 21st century at the national, transnational and trans-civilizational levels of analysis. “Globality” refers to a global condition where people located at any point on Earth are aware of being part of the world as a whole—the world as a single interacting entity. Social interactions occur among actors belonging to different societies, different social strata and different cultural traditions so that the condition of “globality” is experienced in many different ways.

Examples of emerging globalities are social movements generated from the unfulfilled promises of neoliberalism and feelings of discrimination and marginalization of lower social strata; cultural otherization or the blaming of economic problems of certain geographical areas on a low level of cultural development; insecurities generated by technological risks, epidemics, and global terrorism; uncertainties generated by processes of transnational governance, outsourcing, unbalanced trade and massive migrations; biology-machine interfaces and impacts of non-human organisms and technologies on human consciousness and action; long-term threats of global warming, climate change and depletion of bio-diversity; increasing exploitation and marginalization of less industrialized regions.

We state that globalization entails encounters and often clashes among people and nations of different civilizational traditions. Hence, one of the exploratory questions of these volumes will be the extent to which negative or problematic globalities are reactions to failed promises and unrealized ideals of civilizational and national traditions and/or perhaps attempts to revive those traditions. Our notion of civilizational tradition takes inspiration from the classical works of Spengler and Toynbee, Benjamin Nelson, Vytautas Kavolis, Roland Robertson, Johann P. Arnason, Jeremy Smith, and others; a tradition which is in sharp contrast with the civilizationism recently promoted by authoritarian leaders with hegemonic ambitions. The volumes in this series aim to extend the inter-civilizational focus of classical civilizational thinkers from the analysis of the origins and development of civilizations to the fostering of contemporary inter-civilizational dialogues; the intent is to facilitate an international rapprochement in the contemporary atmosphere of global conflicts.

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# Inter-Societal Dynamics

## Toward a General Theory

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***Randall Collins***
***&***
***Christopher Chase-Dunn***

*In appreciation for their efforts to expand*
*the reach of inter-societal theorizing*
*and to inspire out effort, for better or worse,*
*to make this approach more scientific*
*and theoretical*

# Preface

Sociology from its beginning addressed inter-societal dynamics, although these early efforts typically emphasized their effects on internal societal development than inter-societal evolution. More generally, historians and social scientists have been engaged in studying the ebb and flow of empires and other forms of inter-societal relations. Still, it was not until the second half of the twentieth century that inter-societal formations were taken as distinctive *level of social reality* that, in essence, determined many of the internal structures and dynamics of human societies and their other institutional domains. However, this shift in theorizing initially emphasized how inter-societal systems were often highly exploitive. Starting with dependency theory, and then world-systems analysis (WSA), these perspectives challenged the dominant "modernization theory" and policies of the 1950s and 1960s by emphasizing how inter-societal relations reproduced conditions of underdevelopment and international stratification among societies. Nonetheless, these perspectives identified inter-societal systems as a macro-unit of social organization that needs more study and theorizing.

At the same time, these perspectives gave new life to Marxist arguments about the "contradictions of capitalism" becoming evident as world-level capitalism spread across the globe, leading somehow to the collapse of capitalism and the rise of socialism and a new world order. This always struck us as rather unlikely and, like all "end of history" arguments, has more hope and bluster than predictable outcome derived from a general theory. It was, as has always been the case in sociology, giving unjustified credence to ideologies about what *should* occur, as opposed to *what can and does occur*, in human societies, and now inter-societal systems.

As authors, we are a couple of sociological generations apart, with J. H. T. receiving his Ph.D. in the 1960s and A. J. R. receiving his in the twenty-first century. Not only age but our respective knowledge bases are somewhat different. J. H. T. is a general theorist, who is not bothered, by the epithet "grand theory" as long it is *actual theory* rather than grand illusions, as is much of the ideology that penetrates the world-systems tradition today. A. J. R. is trained in world-systems theory and research, as a former student of Christopher Chase-Dunn who has been

one of the most important scholars in this tradition. The book could not have been written without our respective skills, and as will become evident, this book will look very different from other works in the world-systems tradition over the last 50 years. This is *a theory book* rather than an empirical book—although empirical reality is not ignored since, after all, this is what we are trying to explain.

We accept the view that inter-societal systems are *an emergent level of social reality* that has been universal since the beginning of human societies at least 400,000 years ago. Thus, inter-societal systems and their dynamics are an appropriate and, indeed, a necessary subject for abstract sociological theory. For all the good work in WSA, it has been too narrow in its focus on the last 500 years as capitalism arose. In our view, humans have been creating geo-economic systems for hundreds of thousands of years and, hence, should be a set of data points for the other 399,500 years that humans have organized into societies, granted very small and simple societies, but nonetheless societies that have likely (given the data on pre-literate societies) formed geo-economic and geo-political inter-societal systems.

This book is, in part, dedicated to Christopher Chase-Dunn in recognition for his effort to push this simple point, even if he would not necessarily agree to our hard-nosed positivism emphasizing the possibility of generating, as the subtitle for this book proclaims, a *more general theory* of inter-societal dynamics—a theory that covers from the very beginning of such formations to the present and, perhaps, into the future. This is an effort to move toward a general theory rather than a set of historical descriptions, classification of societies in inter-societal formations, and weak ideological arguments expressing hope for a certain form of inter-societal societal governance—socialism.

For J. H. T., writing general theories of all layers and levels of human social organization has basically been a 60-year project dedicated to making sociology a theoretical and explanatory science. Indeed, J. H. T. would prefer that sociology go by its original, but short-lived name, *Social Physics*—a label that might be available if sociology, and especially American sociology continues its evolution into a cheerleader for social justice—a worthy thing to cheer for but not a very useful way to develop knowledge about the dynamics of human societies and inter-societal systems. Social Physics might be a good name for the refugees of American sociology, seeking a label for what they do: value-free (as much as is possible, given that we are all human) analysis of the socio-cultural universe.

The book is also dedicated to Randall Collins who produced a series of articles that inspired J. H. T. to begin studying geo-economic and geo-political formations and their dynamics, and this book is, except for three articles, is the outcome of decades of reading about inter-societal systems. Collins' articles and what they inspired motivated J. H. T. to push hard for Christopher Chase-Dunn's appointment at the University of California Riverside to build a strong graduate specialization populated by a constant flow of very good young scholars to their Ph.D.s, such as A. J. R., who would also take J. H. T.'s theory courses. Our zoom dialogues and exchanges of drafts over the last year have allowed us to write this book, drawing upon our respective knowledge bases and analytical skills.

What we present is only tentative; it simply is our best effort, at this point in time. Our hope is that other scholars working in the world-systems tradition will join us in trying to make WSA less ideological, less descriptive, and less constrained by the emphasis on the last 500 years of history. Instead, WSA should draw upon, as we do, the very large databases, and analyses of these bases, now accumulated on all types of societies that have existed over the last 400,000 years. These offer the information needed to begin developing more abstract theoretical models and inventories of abstract principles. What we offer is not a complete, and perhaps not even an accurate theory, but we hope to convince at least some that this kind of effort at developing general, and highly abstract, theory is useful.

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# Chapter 1
# Fundamental Properties of Societies

Over the last half-century, the revival of inter-societal analysis in the form of World-Systems Analysis (hereafter, WSA) has been one of the most important empirical and theoretical developments within sociology. As we will emphasize in this book, human societies have almost always formed inter-societal systems, although most world-systems analysts have emphasized only the last five hundred years as world-level capitalism began to emerge. Still, historians, political scientists, and anthropologists have long studied inter-societal relations among *all types of societies*—beginning with hunting and gathering and moving through horticulture then agrarianism, industrialism, and post-industrialism. This emphasis has, we feel, led to analysis of the evolution in the present at the expense of analyzing the full range of inter-societal systems. In our view, inter-societal systems have exist since the beginning of human societies and have episodically existed for many thousands of years right up to the present. In contrast, WSA has generally focused on the evolution of capitalism over a very short historical period of human societies. The result is that "theories" are time-bound and often more descriptive of the last 500 years of history rather than the actual theoretical explanation of the fundamental dynamics of all inter-societal systems.

We emphasize this point as a mild critique of current WSA because a general theory of such a universal form of human social organization as inter-societal formations should include *all types in all times and in all places where inter-societal have emerged and evolved*. The emphasis on the rise of capitalism captures only a 500-year slice of a phenomenon that has existed for at least 800 five-hundred-year spans (400,000 years of human societies divided by 500). The result is that this conceptualization of societies and inter-societal systems is often skewed, which is understandable because the recent history of inter-societal systems is of most interest. Yet, the emphasis on the evolution of capitalism is a very limiting case for a phenomenon that has existed for so many hundreds of thousands of years before capitalism. A general theoretical approach should explain *all forms of inter-societal organization*, from the simplest to the most complex.

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This means that the conceptualization of the phenomenon to be explained—inter-societal dynamics—must begin with a conceptualization of the fundamental properties of societies in general and then, the properties and dynamics of inter-relations among all types of societies. As will become evident, our analysis will be more inclusive of the full range of societal and inter-societal formations than most current theories. And, to engage in this kind of analysis, we should begin with a very abstract and general conceptualization of the fundamental properties of *all* societal systems.

## 1.1 The Fundamental Properties of Human Societies

All societies are built from three fundamental elements: (1) *social structures*, (2) *cultural structures*, and (3) *infrastructures*. These vary enormously from the very simple structural, cultural, and infrastructural formations organizing hunting and gathering societies of a few dozen to several hundred individuals to the very complex structures organizing societies numbering many millions and even billions of persons. Yet, in imposing a much longer time frame in conceptualizing societal and inter-societal formations, we can gain greater theoretical purchase on their generic dynamics. And so, we begin our theoretical analysis of inter-societal dynamics by outlining, first, the fundamental properties of social structures and then, move on to the analysis of cultural structures, and finally, infrastructures. For in the end, the properties of social structures, cultural structures, and infrastructures *together* help explain societal and inter-societal formations for all times and places that humans have lived. The result is that theoretical analysis will thus look different than many contemporary WSA analyses, while at the same time explaining the most recent world-system formations. Indeed, a great deal of WSA analysis can be viewed constructing a classification system for analyzing the evolution of the capitalist world-system as much as an explanation of the operative dynamics of inter-societal systems in general.

A theory of inter-societal dynamics must explain the processes operating within and between societies. A system for categorizing societies into roles within international division of labor, such as the WSA's emphasis on *core*, *peripheral*, and *semi-peripheral* societies in the "modern world-system" was a useful beginning point (Wallerstein 1974). However, this created two fundamental problems: First, how are the dynamics of modern world-systems to be explained by a typology of three types when one of these three types, most typically the *semi-periphery*, is often missing empirically? And second, and perhaps a more fundamental problem, how does a typology that only classifies phenomena explain the dynamic processes driving these phenomena? Many WSA theoretical approaches have been able to create dynamic models, but some of these have suffered from the problem of not having a sufficiently robust conception of the elements of societies that are involved in inter-societal formations. Often, this problem stems from a weak conception of *the internal dynamics* of the societies forming inter-societal systems. In this chapter,

we address this underlying problem by outlining, in detail, the full range of social structures, cultural structures, and infrastructures that are involved in creating inter-societal formations.

More will be needed, however, because an outline of the properties of social structures, cultural structures, and infrastructures is only a beginning point of theorizing. We will also need to specify the dynamic processes operating within and between these structures in the formation of inter-societal systems. Still, for the moment, let us simply outline the fundamental societal-level structures that drive the formation of societal and inter-societal systems. We will touch on some dynamic processes, but theoretical models and propositions to be presented in later chapters will delineate a more robust picture of the *dynamics* driving these structures of social life.

## 1.2 Social Structures in Societies

There are two pillars on which human societies are eventually constructed: (1) *institutional systems* or domains and (2) *stratification systems*. Humans survived over the long run of human history by elaborating the number of institutional systems (Abrutyn and Turner 2022). Stratification systems emerged somewhat later and as a consequence of institutional evolution. Still, even among hunter-gatherers with only one differentiated institutional system (kinship), selection pressures on small populations of hunter-gatherers could occasionally push for very rudimentary forms of inequality and stratification.

### *1.2.1 Institutional Domains in Human Societies*

Institutions are constructed from *corporate units* organizing differentiated status positions, roles, and normative systems creating divisions of labor within a given institutional domain, such as kinship, economy, polity, religion, education, etc. As noted above, institutional systems have evolved as a response to selection pressures on human populations as they attempted over the last 400,000 years to adapt to diverse environments, eventually inhabiting all parts of the globe. There are only three generic types of corporate units: *communities* (organizing individuals in ecological space), *groups* (organizing behaviors of people occupying positions and playing roles), and *organizations* (coordinating groups of individuals in communities).

The first human societies were organized only at the group level. Kinship was confined to nuclear family groups as part of nomadic bands. Such was the structure of human societies for hundreds of thousands of years. Thus, the first bands were built, from one institutional domain—kinship—with all other institutional activities embedded within nuclear families and the band organizing these families. Thus,

economic, religious, educational, political, and legal *activities* were not yet structured as distinctive institutional systems but, rather, were embedded in the normative systems of kinship and band, with the band constituting a simple organization of nuclear kin units, although if bands settled down, they could and did morph into a second type of corporate unit, *community*. And, as populations settled down into more permanent communities, they grew larger and increasingly faced selection pressures that, over time, led to the evolution of the diverse institutional domains listed in Table 1.2. And, in turn, as each institutional domain emerged with its own *generalized media of exchange* as outlined in Fig. 1.1 on page 5, these media and other generalized forms of value (e.g., prestige, honor, positive emotions) were increasingly distributed unequally to members of bands that became communities, thus introducing the first signs of stratification, and hence, the second pillar of to human societies.

Figure 1.1 describes the process by which generalized media first emerge within activities that become institutionalized Table 1.2. Generalized symbolic media have some special qualities. They are the media by which discourse and talk of individuals pursuing various types of activities—e.g., family relations, economic actions to secure resources for production and exchange, relations involving power and authority to coordinate and control, spiritual activities revolving around ritual appeal to supernatural forces, and so on for all institutional domains that evolve (see Table 1.2 for more details). As generalized symbolic media are used in discourse among individuals, themes evolve that will eventually become codified in beliefs, norms, and ideologies. As these themes form ideologies, they moralize institutional activities that are codified into ideologies of right, wrong, appropriate, and inappropriate behaviors when operating within an institutional domain. Ideologies reflect normative agreements that emerge among individuals engaged in the institutional activity, while at the same providing moral guidance as to the nature of norms.

**Table 1.1** Legend for signs on figures

| |
|---|
| + = positive effect on |
| - = negative effect on |
| +/- = positive curvilinear effect on |
| -/+ = negative curvilinear effect on |
| +/= = positive effect, leveling off |
| =/+ = lagged positive effect, turning positive |
| =/- = lagged negative effect, turning negative |

The signs on lines connecting variables in the model in Fig. 1.1 are defined above. These will be used in all figures in this book. Marking for easy reference this page can make referencing the legend easier.

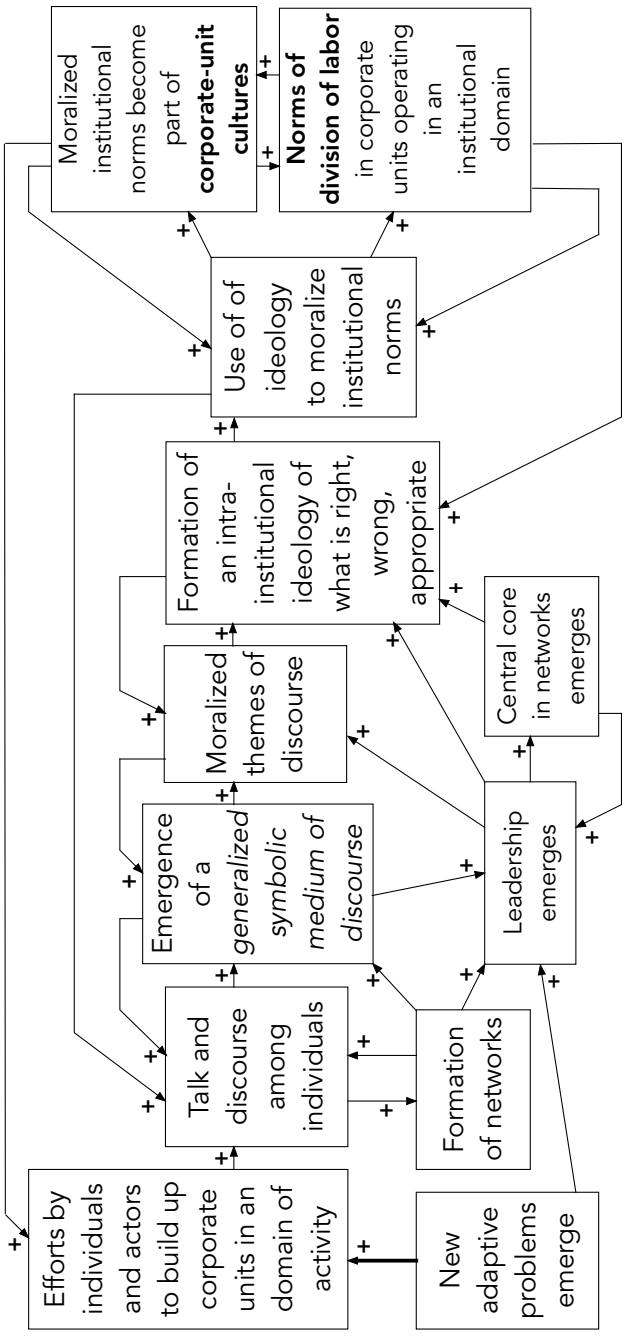


**Fig. 1.1** The process of developing generalized symbolic media of discourse and moralization of institutional ideologies

In turn, institutional norms are used to regulate the formation of corporate units, revealing a division of labor regulated by specific norms and roles within different institutional domains. Accordingly, the terms of discourse that rise when engaged in activities—economic, political, religious, family, artistic, educational, etc.—eventually are codified into a generalized medium for engaging in not only discourse but in exchanges among individuals. Moreover, generalized media *moralize* human action and interaction by generating conceptions of right and proper behavior within the corporate units that make up an institutional domain.

Generalized symbolic media not only provide symbolic tools for discourse and moral guidance in the formation of ideologies and normative systems guiding conduct, but they also become *valued resources* in their own right, as is outlined in Table 1.2. Each generalized medium is valuable to humans and each institutional domain has its own unique generalized symbolic medium for discourse, exchange, moralizing conduct, and developing cultural systems like ideologies and norms organizing conduct in corporate units in institutional domains. Having *power*, *money*, *love-loyalty*, *piety*, *knowledge*, or any of the generalized symbolic media listed in Table 1.2 is rewarding, and as societies become stratified, one of the basic resources distributed unequally is the generalized symbolic media of various institutional domains that, in turn, activate other valued states such has positive

**Table 1.2** Generalized symbolic media of institutional domains

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

***Note*** These and other generalized symbolic media are employed in discourse among actors, in articulating themes, and in developing ideologies about what should and ought to transpire in an institutional domain. They tend to circulate within a domain, but all of the symbolic media can circulate in other domains, although some media are more likely to do so than others. These media are also valued resources distributed by corporate units within institutional domains and, hence, are among the resources distributed unequally in a society's system of stratification

emotions, prestige, and a sense of well-being in general. As will become evident, the culture of a society and geo-cultural formations across societies are all built from institutional ideologies which emerge from the moralizing effects of generalized symbolic media.

Yet, even when periodically settled, early societies of humans were quite simple, revealing only one institutional system or domain (nuclear families as the basis of *kinship*), one generalized symbolic medium (*love-loyalty*), and very little, if any, forms of stratification unless a population was under stress. Thus, the nature of inter-societal systems among these early forms of societies was limited by their simplicity of the structure and, as we will see, by the nature of their cultures (with limited generalized symbolic media to develop ideologies and norms) and little technology to build up infrastructures. Still, inter-societal contact among hunter-gatherers would be a force that could push populations to begin developing other institutional systems, such as religion, economy, and polity which are somewhat differentiated from kinship and, hence, different from the generalized symbolic medium of kinship. And once the number of generalized symbolic media began to increase, so did the number of valued resources that can be distributed unequally, thus marking the beginnings of inequality and stratification among categories of persons.

The evolution of human societies from simple to more complex formations revolving around institutional differentiation and increased levels of inequality and stratification were often the result of problematic inter-societal relations. Indeed, early sociologists like Herbert Spencer (1874–96) argued that circumscription of societies in the same territory could lead to competition and warfare that would cause the emergence of polity as an institutional system as well as stratification built around inequalities in the distribution of power and authority to certain social categories (e.g., male adult leaders) marking the beginnings of a stratification system. Spencer argued that warfare between societies had been a powerful force in the evolution of human societies from simple forms to ever-more complex forms. He also recognized, as have many anthropologists, that expanded trade between populations can make economic activity more prominent, thus marking the very beginnings of the economy as a differentiated institutional system as well as the beginnings of stratification around unequal distributions of valued resources from the trade of bulk and prestige goods with other populations, as well as unequal distribution of prestige and authority inhering in the inequality of valued goods acquired in exchanges with other small societies.

### *1.2.2 Stratification Systems in Human Societies*

Stratification systems are constructed from *categoric units* that place individuals into social categories marking differences (by sex, gender, age, ethnicity, religious affiliation, occupation, etc.) that carry varying evaluations and that become the basis for inequalities in the distribution of valued resources which can, as noted above, be generalized (e.g., prestige, esteem, positive emotions) or more specific to the

*generalized symbolic media* distributed within and between institutional domains (e.g., *money*, *power* and *authority*, *piety*, *love-loyalty*, *knowledge*, etc.).

As institutional systems evolve and, eventually, differentiate into specific domains, they develop generalized symbolic media as part of the cultural structure of a society (see next section) that are used as resources for building cultural and social structures (and infrastructures). For example, *money* is a symbol of value and emerged in a primitive form quite early in human societal evolution to operate as a mechanism for conducting exchanges within the economy of a society, as well as a mechanism for intra-societal exchanges between the economy and other institutional domains and, of course, for inter-societal exchanges among societies.

At the same time, money as a valued resource is increasingly distributed unequally by the corporate units of the economy, with all other institutions using money in some way, thus initiating stratification or the unequal distribution of valued resources to categories of individuals and subpopulations. The structural formations and, in the case of generalized media, cultural formations that humans use to adapt to environments also generate inequality and stratification that often work against the integration of societies and inter-societal systems.

While the most fundamental categoric units—i.e., sex, gender, and age—were not initially used to stratify people by differential evaluations of their worth and by inequalities in the distribution of resource shares, the very beginnings of stratification would sometimes emerge, as noted earlier, when bands settled into communities (even if only temporarily), when engaged in warfare with neighbors, or when bands faced environmental crises requiring leadership, or when some other force generated selection pressures on a simple band of hunter-gatherers. Under these conditions leadership would evolve into authority and power, marking the very beginnings of stratification.

Still, societies with distinctive classes and ranked social strata would not emerge for many thousands of years, although precursors to full-blown stratification would periodically emerge when populations were under stress. Indeed, one source of stress was the conflict between populations, which would push even simple hunter-gatherers to organize leadership systems that, in turn, led to differential evaluations of leaders who would be given more prestige and authority—two highly valued resources that are unequally distributed in all developed stratification systems. At other times, religious leaders would emerge (i.e., shaman) and gain prestige, thus again marking early "differences" (in prestige and influence) within bands that otherwise were mostly egalitarian. Thus, human societies were, in their beginnings, not stratified to any great extent, but eventually they would become stratified as they grew, as they came into conflict with other bands of hunter-gatherers, as they were under ecological stress, and any condition putting pressure on bands of kin units. But for most nomadic hunter-gathering populations, there were powerful cultural ideologies (see next section) against differential evaluations of categories of person and inequality in the distribution of resources.

As discussed above, we can conceive of societies as composed of three subsystems. The first subsystem is a social structure, with the basic skeleton of a societal social structure modeled in Fig. 1.2. We will turn to culture next, followed

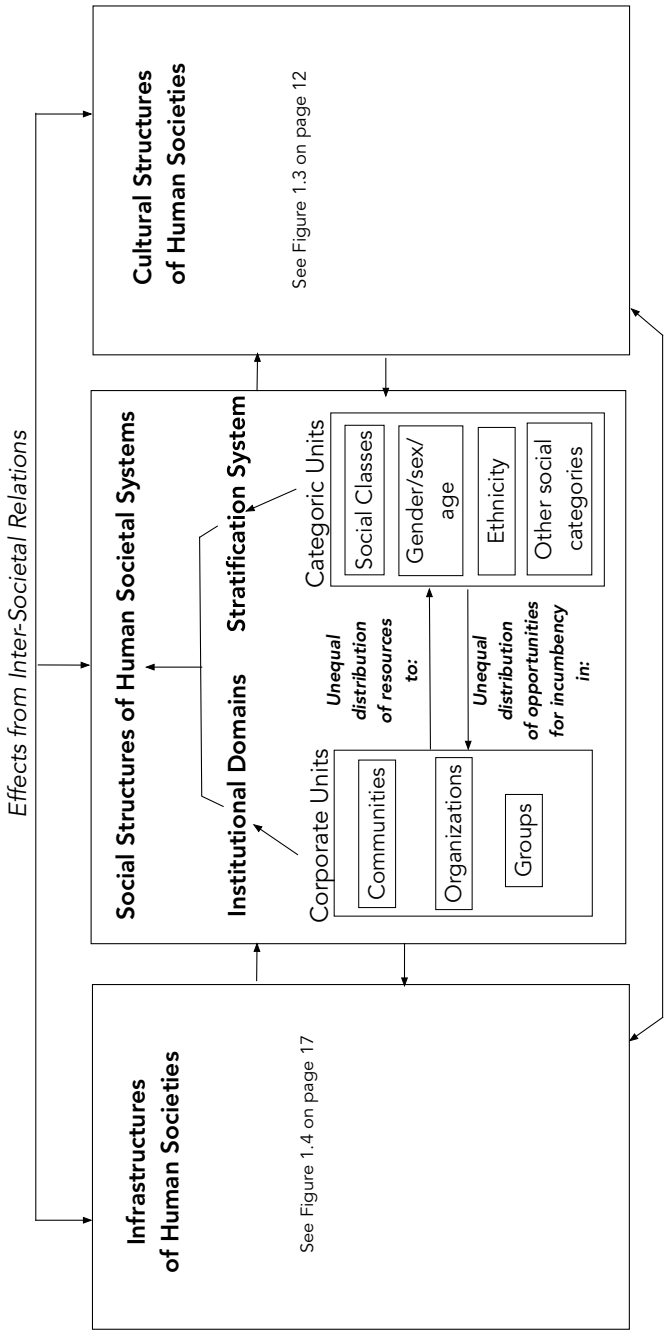


**Fig. 1.2** Fundamental subsystems of human societies

by infrastructure. The purely structural formations of societies are built by successive embedding of corporate units, with organizations built from groups and with communities constructed from organizations and groups. Corporate units at all levels of social organization distribute resources unequally based on the location of individuals in the divisions of labor in groups and organizations, and the location of individuals and their families within the ecology of communities.

The unequal distribution of resources, and hence stratification as a basic social structure of society, is determined by the categoric units of individuals and subpopulations of individuals that become marked and differentially evaluated by cultural standards that arise as generalized symbolic media and institutional ideologies. The more categoric-unit memberships—in age, sex, gender, religion, ethnicity, sexual preference, or any other designation by cultural labels—are evaluated on a scale of positive to negative, the more likely is this scaling to lead to inequality in the distribution of valued resources. Accordingly, stratification systems are based on two fundamental pillars: (1) generalized resources such as prestige, positive emotions, and definitions of moral worth are distributed unequally as are (2) generalized symbolic media of institutional domains (e.g., *money* from the economy, *authority* and *power* from all polity, *love-loyalty* from kinship, *knowledge* from education, *health* from medicine, *piety and sacredness* from religion, aesthetics from art, and *competition* from sport, *justice* from law, etc.). Once these two pillars of societies are fully in place, so are symbolic systems allowing for the formation of a culture of a society or cultural models in inter-societal systems.

Moreover, generalized media circulate across institutional domains, as is the case when (a) *money* is used to pay incumbents in corporate units of diverse institutional domains or to purchase in markets the output of different domains and when (b) *power and authority* "franchised" by polity[1] and law to corporate units as a whole and incumbents in corporate units within diverse institutional domains (e.g., to parents in families, educators in schools, doctors in medicine, and so on for all corporate units organized by authority). Inequality also increases when valued and devaluated categoric units are often consolidated. For example, it is often the case for devalued ethnics (by prejudicial beliefs and widespread discrimination by a majority of a population) to be denied full access to corporate units bestowing generalized resources (prestige, honor) as well as highly valued generalized symbolic media as resources, such as *knowledge* from education, *money* from the economy, *justice* from law, *health* from medicine, and *authority* from a polity or corporate units in diverse institutional domains. The converse is true for those who are members of categoric units that are evaluated positively. This consolidation

[1] Power is, from an institutional perspective, given by polity as conditional authority to corporate units in institutional domains. It can almost always be taken back, but this *franchising* of authority reduces the monitoring and administrative costs to the polity of micro-managing organizations. Yet, in highly authoritarian societies, one can see that authority in corporate units has a very visible fist of political control. Such is the case in all societies; and in so distributing authority, polity also distributions the generalized symbolic medium of power to some and not others in corporate units.