Chapter 3
Micro Environments of the Meso Realm

Ultimately, corporate and categoric units—and indeed, all of social reality—are built up by the interpersonal behaviors of individuals in encounters. This point has been made often, whether by Randall Collins' (1981) argument that social reality is chains of interaction rituals iterated over time and space, or Herbert Blumer's (1969) proclamation that society is symbolic interaction. True enough, but where do such bold statements take us? In my view, these kinds of proclamations take us to a kind of reductionism that limits the ability to theorize about meso and macro levels of reality. Concepts denoting the operation of micro dynamics *cannot* fully explain the emergent social realities built from these dynamics. Like almost everything in the social world, there are reverse casual effects: the very realities created by interaction impose constraints on interaction. Moreover, and this is the point of the present chapter, micro dynamics can be conceptualized as an external environment for meso-sociocultural formations. As part of the environment to which meso-level units must adapt, the micro level of reality continues to generate selection pressures on actors in the meso realm. People's reactions to their experiences in corporate and categoric units can be analyzed *collectively* or in *sum*, especially as they become codified into cultural beliefs. Thus, when micro-dynamic processes generate collectively or simultaneously experienced emotional reactions to experiences in corporate and categoric units, a new set of environmental pressures are placed on the meso realm. And, as I will argue in Chap. 8, micro dynamics are often a source of change in corporate and categoric units as individuals create social movement organizations, a type of corporate unit whose goal is the change what transpires at not only the micro level but at the meso and macro as well.

At first, it may take a bit of a mind shift to visualize the micro as an environment for the meso and, by extension, the macro realm built from

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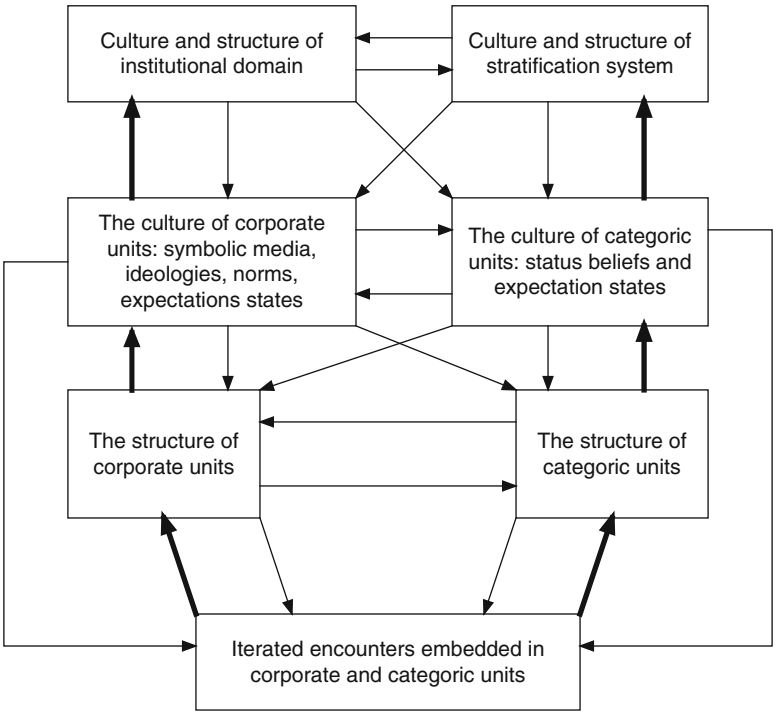

Fig. 3.1 Micro reality as an environment of the Meso realm

corporate and categoric units. The reason this point of vision may seem odd is that persons are standing inside encounters lodged in corporate and categoric units; they are not outside the units that they constrain in the same way as institutional domains and stratification systems are "outside" corporate and categoric units. Yet, if we examine the *collective effects* of micro dynamics—that is, subpopulations of individuals who are incumbent in corporate and categoric unit or who want to be incumbent—we can begin to see how dynamics operating at the level of encounters represent an important environmental constraint on the meso realm. Figure 3.1 outlines my point here.

In Fig. 3.1, the bold arrows denote the successive, upward causal effects of micro-level processes among individuals in encounters embedded in corporate and categoric units. I have extended the bold arrows to the macro realm because, at times, the micro environments of the meso realm change the structure and culture of corporate and categoric units to such an extent that they drive the transformation of institutional domains and the stratification system. For example, social movements revolving around civil rights

in the United States involved emotional arousal over injustices at the micro level that led to collective mobilization of individuals into a series of social movement organizations (SMO's) which dramatically changed the structure and culture of most corporate and categoric units in America as well as the structure and culture of key institutional domains and the stratification system and, indeed, the whole society. This collective movement began at the micro level of encounters as individuals felt that their fundamental needs, status locations, and roles in corporate and categoric units were unpleasant and demeaning, causing emotional arousal that led to the mobilization of resources to change the structure and culture of corporate and categoric units. Thus, the micro environment composed of populations of persons in encounters embedded in corporate and categoric units exerted pressure for change in the structure and culture of American society and the sociocultural formations from which it is built.

At other times, this micro environment can sustain the structure and culture of meso-level units, even when they are highly oppressive, if individuals accept as inevitable their subordination. Thus, corporate and categoric units are always embedded in an environmental field created by individuals' collective experiences as they seek to meet transactional needs in status positions and roles embedded in corporate and categoric units. Emotions can radiate across and out from locations in corporate units and memberships in categoric units. In so doing, emotions create a collective mood that becomes codified into beliefs and potentially counter-institutional ideologies that can mobilize individuals collectively and thereby force actors in the meso realm to make adjustments to the culture and structure of corporate and categoric units. In this chapter, my goal is to draw from volume 2 of *Theoretical Principles of Sociology* to outline the elements of this micro-level environment. Later, we can see how the environment conceptualized in this chapter and that in Chap. 2 affects meso dynamics.

Elements of the Micro Realm as an Environment for the Meso Realm

In Table 1.1 on p. 14, I briefly defined the forces of both the micro and macro realms. Micro-dynamic forces revolve around (1) transactional need states or motives, (2) status-organizing processes, (3) role processes, (4) interpersonal demography, (5) interpersonal ecology, and (6) emotional arousal. These dynamics drive the formation and operation of both *focused*

(face-to-face) encounters and *unfocused* (avoidance of face engagement) encounters. Depending on how these dynamics play out as individuals interact in corporate and categoric units, the environment of meso-level structures will vary. Let me now review each of these micro-dynamic forces with an eye to the environmental pressures they impose on corporate and categoric units.

Transactional Needs in Encounters

Human actions are always motivated, and ultimately, much of the "energy"-driving behavior and, hence, all of social reality come from individuals trying to meet fundamental need states (Turner 1987, 1988, 2002a, b, 2008, 2010b). There are many needs that are inherent in being a biological organism—for example, for food, water, and sex—but the ones that I emphasize are those that are always activated when individuals are copresent in unfocused and focused encounters. The viability of an encounter depends upon individuals' capacity to meet these needs and, as a consequence, so does the long-run viability of corporate and categoric units. When a high proportion of individuals are able to meet transactional needs, the structure and culture of corporate and categoric units become more viable and, in the eyes of individuals, legitimate. Conversely, when these needs, especially the most powerful of these transactional needs, are unrealized, then reproduction of the culture and structure of the meso-level units will become ever-more problematic.

Table 3.1 outlines a version of a similar table (7.1 in volume 2 of *Theoretical Principles of Sociology*) on the basic types of transactional needs. Humans are motivated to (1) verify their identities, (2) make a profit in the exchange of resources, (3) feel a sense of group inclusion, (4) experience trust with others, and (5) derive a sense of facticity. This number and listing also rank-orders these transactional needs in terms of their relative power to energize persons in encounters embedded in meso-level sociocultural formations.

Needs for Identity Verification. People have identities—that is, emotionally laden cognitions about themselves—along a number of dimensions. *Core identities* are cognitions and feelings that persons have about themselves in general and that they carry with them to virtually all encounters. As suggested by Fig. 3.2, where identities are rank-ordered in terms of their relative power, core identity is the most emotionally laden level of self. Moreover, many of the cognitions that are part of this self are implicit

Table 3.1 Transactional needs

1. *Verification of identities*. Needs to verify one or more of the four basic identities that individuals present in all encounters
   a. *Core identity*. The conceptions and emotions that individuals have about themselves as persons that they carry to most encounters.
   b. *Social identity*. The conception that individuals have of themselves by virtue of their membership in categoric units which, depending upon the situation, will vary in salience to self and others; when salient, individuals seek to have others verify their social identity.
   c. *Group identity*. The conception that individuals have about their incumbency in corporate units (groups, organizations, and communities) and/or their identification with the members, structure, and culture of a corporate unit; when individuals have a strong sense of identification with a corporate unit, they seek to have others verify this identity.
   d. *Role identity*. The conception that individuals have about themselves as role players, particularly roles embedded in corporate units nested in institutional domains; the more a role identity is lodged in a domain, the more likely will individuals need to have this identity verified by others.
2. *Making a profit the exchange of resources*. Needs to feel that the receipt of resources by persons in encounters exceeds their costs and investments in securing these resources and that their shares of resources are just compared to (a) the shares that others receive in the situation and (b) reference points that are used to establish what is a just share.
3. *Group inclusion*. Needs to feel that one is a part of the ongoing flow of interaction in an encounter, and the more focused is the encounter, the more powerful is this need.
4. *Trust*. Needs to feel that others are predictable, sincere, respective of self, and capable of rhythmic sustaining synchronization.
5. *Facticity*. Needs to feel that, for the purposes of the present interaction, individuals share a common intersubjectivity, that matters in the situation are as they seem, and that the situation has an obdurate character.

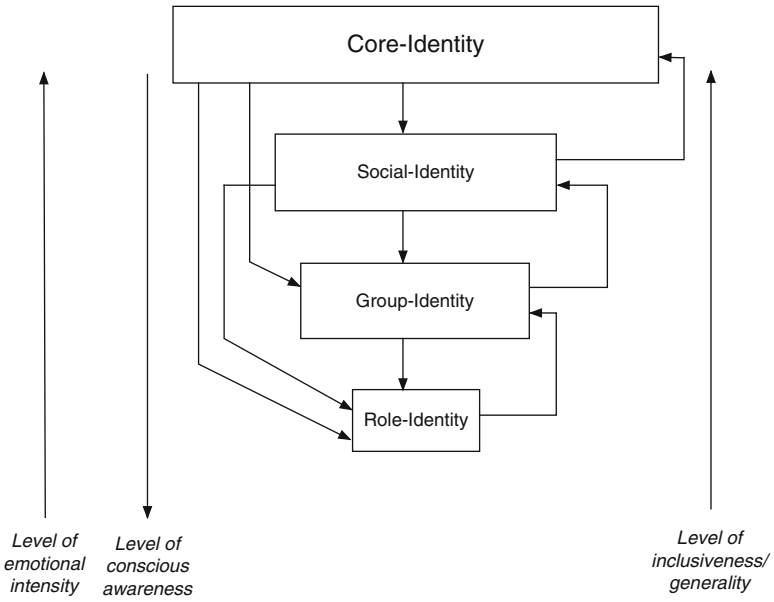

Fig. 3.2 Types and levels of identity formation

and, even at times, repressed, which can raise the emotional potential considerably as repressed emotions transmute and eventually surface when core identity is not verified (Turner 2002a, 2002b, 2008, 2011). People have powerful needs to verify this most important of identities, and since it is the highest-order identity, it is usually part of all other levels of identity formation. Thus, even when core identity is not directly on the line in an encounter, the failure to verify other identities down the hierarchy will activate strong feelings to the extent that the core identity is part of one of the three other types of identities. As a consequence, even if only indirectly, the core identities of individuals in corporate and categoric units should, when taken together as a whole, be a very important dimension of the environments of corporate and categoric units. If people cannot verify their core identity, they will experience highly charged negative emotions, and when sufficient numbers of individuals experience such emotions, their feelings, beliefs, perceptions, and actions become an important environmental pressure for change of corporate and categoric units. Conversely, if core identities are realized among most incumbents in corporate and categoric units, individuals will experience positive emotions, thereby making corporate and categoric units more viable and more likely to be reproduced.

The next level of identity formation is a *social identity*, which is built up around persons' membership in categoric units, such as age, gender, ethnicity, religion, and social class. Depending upon the situation, this identity can be very salient, and especially so, if core identity is tied up in the ability of persons to have their categoric-unit membership verified. But more than verification is involved, or at least an extra measure of verification is required: persons seek positive evaluation of their social identity. Thus, even if people have a devalued social identity verified, this verification will not generate positive emotions unless individuals perceive that others are also offering a positive evaluation of this identity. When the environment of a corporate or categoric unit includes large numbers of individuals who have failed to have their social identities verified *and* viewed positively by others, this environment will be emotionally charged and place extra pressures on a corporate unit to change its culture and division of labor and on those responding to members of a categoric unit to revise *status beliefs* and expectation states. One of the reasons that ethnic, religious, and gender dynamics can be so volatile is because identities are built around persons' categoric-unit memberships, and when larger numbers of people consistently feel that their social identities go unverified or remain negatively evaluated, their collective emotional reaction increases the volatility in the environment of meso-level units.

The next level of identity formation is *group identity*, which I view as an identity that is formed from a person's identification with the personnel, structure, and culture of a corporate unit—whether a group, organization, or community. A person does not have to be an actual member of a corporate unit to form a group identity—as is the case with most sports fans who often, to say the least, get highly emotional about "their team". In general, when people identify with a corporate unit, and especially when they also put elements of their core identity on the line, group identities can become very strong. Gangs, motorcycle clubs, university professors and students, residents in a community, and many other potential affiliations can go beyond just being an incumbent in a corporate unit. Indeed, people often take the next step and build a set of cognitions and emotions about themselves as incumbents in particular corporate units, with the expectation that others will verify this source of identity.

The least comprehensive conception of self is *role identity*, which is the cognitions and feelings that people have about how they play a role in a corporate unit within an institutional domain. These identities tend to be narrower, but they can also become more inclusive. For example, the role of mother in the family often pulls in elements from core identity, social identity (mother as a categoric unit), and group identity (mother as member of family); the result is that a lot can be on the line when other identities are part of a role identity, thus raising the potential emotional stakes. Moreover, role identities are more numerous than other identity formations because, potentially, an identity can be built up around each role a person plays in diverse corporate units—for example, worker, father, mother, son, daughter, team player, church member, community resident, and so on for many potential roles in corporate units.

Since identity verification is the most powerful of the transactional needs—at least, I hypothesize that such is the case—this set of motive states arouses emotions among individuals that become an important part of the environment of the meso units where people seek to have their identities verified. Depending upon which identities are salient in encounters embedded in meso-level units and the degree to which they are verified in encounters, the environment of meso-level units will vary. When, for example, most identities go unverified, all of those individuals for whom this has occurred will experience negative emotions, or conversely, when individuals have all of their identities verified, the flow of positive emotional energy will be part of the environment. In either case, the structure and culture of corporate and categoric units will be affected. Positive emotions make meso units viable and legitimate, whereas consistent arousal of negative emotions creates an environment that will, in the end, force changes in corporate and categoric units.

Needs for Making A Profit in Exchange of Resources. As all exchange theories emphasize, people seek to derive a "profit" relative to their costs (resources given up and alternatives forgone) and investments (accumulated costs). Virtually anything can become a resource, and certainly, the generalized symbolic media circulating within and across domains constitute one class of resources. However, the processes by which individuals calculate, typically implicitly, whether or not they have made a profit in exchange are more complicated than subtracting costs/investments from the value of resources gained in an encounter. There are several additional complications related to the comparison points used by individuals when assessing if profits are fair or acceptable.

First of all, people also assess the cost investment/rewards gained relative to a *standard of fairness* or justice. These standards are part of the cultural environment of an encounter, and they operate at several levels: (a) the norms guiding the exchange itself within a particular encounter or an iterated encounter, (b) the norms organizing the division of labor of corporate units in which the encounter is embedded, (c) the status beliefs and expectation states of categoric units, (d) the moral codes of the ideologies or metaideologies of institutional domains, and (e) even the value premises of a society. Thus, the micro-level cultural environment of meso-level units is, to varying degrees, internalized and, at the very least, used to assess fairness. When individuals perceive that standards of fairness are not realized, they will experience and often express negative emotions, and when they consistently have such experience in mass or collectively over time, these emotions and the cultural standards that have been employed to assess justice become part of the environment that places constraints on the meso realm.

Secondly, people engage in a comparison process that can become rather complex. One point of comparison is with the rewards less costs/investments of others relative to self. People are not just invoking cultural standards, but they are also using them in comparing to others' payoffs relative to self. If a person perceives that he or she has realized a profit and met standards of fairness or justice, this person will feel *satisfied*, but this emotion can turn to *dissatisfaction* and other negative emotional responses if others in the situation or others in similar situations seem to be getting a more profitable payoff with the same level of costs/investments. Another comparison point is what Thibault and Kelley (1959) term *comparison level of alternatives* or the ratio of payoffs to costs/investments in other situations that persons perceive (whether accurately and inaccurately) themselves to have forgone or that they feel are available to them. Still another point of comparison is the relative status of persons;

people assess their payoffs relative to the status locations in the division of labor in a corporate unit or the diffuse status characteristics of a categoric unit. People of higher status in corporate units and more highly valued categoric units are supposed to gain more profit than those lower in the status hierarchy. And so, when lower-ranked persons gain the same as higher-ranked people, those in higher positions in corporate units and in more valued categoric units will experience variants of *anger*. Even when higher-ranked individuals perceive that they get more than lower-ranked, they will still become angry if they believe the difference in payoffs for lower- and higher-ranked persons is not "big enough." A final point of comparison is *abstracted distributions*. Individuals often carry a sense for the overall pattern of unequal distribution within (a) a corporate and for a categoric unit, (b) an institutional domain, or (c) even a whole society (a kind of implicit sense of the Gini coefficients for the distributions of various resources such as money, power, prestige), and they often use this sense of the overall distribution of resources as a comparison point for assessing whether their resource payoffs relative to costs/investments are fair. As Jasso (1990, 1993, 2001, 2006) has documented, a much smaller level of perceived under-reward will arouse negative emotions like *anger* than is the case for over-reward where it takes a great deal of over-reward to arouse such emotions as *guilt*. In fact, people may only begin to feel guilt when they perceive that their over-rewards lead to under-reward (in terms of standards of fairness) for worthy others (Hegtvedt and Markovsky 1995).

Since both corporate units and categoric units allocate valued resources unequally, cultural standards of fairness are almost always salient and become a very important part of the environment of the meso-level units distributing resources to individuals who almost always make comparisons to assess payoffs. Whatever the specific cognitive route in making comparisons, the emotions aroused become a very important dimension of the meso-level environment. People become emotionally aroused along a positive–negative continuum, and if larger numbers of person or strategically placed individuals react negatively to their experiences in meso-level units, change in these units becomes ever-more likely. And, if the change is sufficiently dramatic and comprehensive, then the structure and culture of even macro-level sociocultural formations will be transformed. Conversely, if most individuals experience positive emotions by virtue of their incumbency in corporate units across domains and from memberships in categoric units, then the micro level creates an environment that reinforces and legitimates meso-level formations and, by extension, those in the macro realm as well (Turner 2008, 2010b).

Needs for Group Inclusion. The third most powerful transactional need is for group inclusion. Individuals need to feel part of the ongoing flow of interpersonal activity in an encounter or in a series of iterated encounters. They do not always have to feel high solidarity but only a sense that they are included in the interpersonal flow and that they are part of this flow when encounters are repeated and chained together. Feeling included has large effects on whether or not other transactional needs are realized, since it is more difficult to verify an identity or feel that payoffs are proportionate to costs/investments and all salient comparison points when a person does not sense that he or she involved in, and part of, key encounters. The same is true for other transactional needs such as needs for trust and facticity discussed below.

Just how included a person must be in encounters depends upon the dynamics of embedding of encounters in meso-level social structures. If individuals do not feel sufficiently included in encounters that are critical to maintaining status in key locations in the division of labor of a corporate or in important categoric units, then their emotional reaction will be stronger. This reaction will be doubly strong if they had invested role, group, social, or core identities in a sense of being fully part of encounters in meso-level structures. Conversely, their emotional reaction will be muted if participation was not so important and if identities were not on the line.

Individuals can also experience engulfment in ongoing encounters because they are too included to the point where they feel that they are smothered and, moreover, that they cannot realize needs to feel part of other ongoing encounters in other corporate units or that they cannot meet other transactional needs. Thus, there is often a delicate balance between a sense of inclusion or engulfment, but even more problematic is the situation where people sense that they are not a fully acknowledged participant in encounters that are important to them, especially encounters where expectations for realizing profits in exchanges or for sensing verification of one or more levels of self are high. Under these conditions, individuals will experience a potential collage of negative emotions such as *anger*, *fear*, *frustration*, *sadness*, *shame*, or even *guilt*, and if enough people have this sense of exclusion, the negative emotional energy generated will become part of the environment of a meso-level unit, thereby forcing a corporate unit or particular portions of the unit to adapt to this emotionally laden environment.

Needs for Trust. In most encounters, individuals need to feel a predictability and rhythm to the interactions and that others are sincere and respectful of self. Without a rhythm to the interaction, it is difficult to have a sense of group inclusion, to perceive that exchanges have been profitable, and without a sense of people's sincerity and respect for self, identity verifica-

tion becomes problematic. This need state for trust is probably lower key than the first three transactional needs, but if people chronically experience a lack of trust, and if enough people in corporate units have this sense, then the negative emotions aroused will become part of the environment to which a corporate unit must adapt.

Needs for Facticity. People have needs for ontological security (Giddens 1984) or that "things are as they appear" and for a sense that, for the purposes of an interaction, they share intersubjective worlds (Schutz 1967[1932]; Garfinkel 1967). When they cannot have this sense, they experience mild negative emotions like *anger*, *irritation*, and *frustration*, and, if the situation was important, perhaps stronger levels of these emotions, plus *fear*. When this need cannot be met, people will feel uncomfortable and, moreover, that they cannot meet other transactional needs. And if the situation was as important in meeting needs, especially for identity verification and profitable exchange payoffs, the discomfort will activate more powerful negative emotions.

In sum, then, these five basic transactional needs are always present in interaction, and no matter what other episodic or chronic need states motivate people in an interaction, these transactional needs will drive interacting in encounters (Turner 1987, 1988, 2002a, b, 2008, 2010b). When looked at collectively, these needs exert considerable pressure—a kind of micro-level selection pressure—on the structure and culture of corporate and categoric units. The same is true of other micro-dynamics forces examined below, but need states are the energy for not just interaction but also for all of the other structures built up from iterated interactions in encounters. Structures and their culture that consistently fail to allow individuals to meet these need states will eventually become less viable and subject to change. But, even before this outcome arises, encounters in corporate and categoric units are constantly under pressure to enable individuals to meet these needs because, when they are not met, day-to-day interactions in chains of encounters become tense and awkward, with the result that individuals often become motivated to change the structure and culture of a situation before more volatile reactions occur.

Culture Taking/Culture Making and Normatizing Encounters

In any encounter of face-to-face interaction, individuals assemble expectations along a number of critical dimensions, summarized in Table 3.2

Table 3.2 Dimensions or axes of normatization

Normatization is the process of culture taking and culture making in which individuals establish expectations for how individuals should interact during the course of an encounter. These expectations revolve around the following axes:

1. *Categorizing the encounter*. The process of culture taking and culture making in which individuals typify (a) the categoric-unit memberships of participants in the encounter, (b) the relative amounts of work-practical, social, and ceremonial activity to be conducted in the encounter, (c) the degree of intimacy to be achieved with others along a continuum of treating others as personages (people as only representatives of categoric units or as incumbent in positions of corporate units), persons (with some knowledge of others as individuals), and intimates (with more in-depth knowledge of others), and (d) the relative authority/power of self and others, and, on the basis of these nodes of categorization, expectations for behaviors of self and others are developed.
2. *Framing the encounter*. The process of culture taking and culture making that imposes expectations for what can be included and, conversely, what is to be excluded as subjects of talk and nonverbal behaviors.
3. *Forming communication in the encounter*. The process of culture taking and culture making by which expectations for the proper modes of (a) talk and conversation as well as (b) expressions of body language and demeanor.
4. *Ritualizing the encounter*. The process of culture taking and culture making in which expectations are developed for the appropriate rituals to (a) open and close interaction, (b) form and structure the flow of interaction, (c) symbolize the significance of the interaction, and (d) repair breaches to the interaction.
5. *Emotionally energizing the encounter*. The process of culture taking and culture making whereby expectations for the nature and valence of (a) emotions to be felt by a person and (b) emotions to be displayed to others are established.

(which is shortened version of the discussion in Chap. 6 of volume 2 of *Theoretical Principles of Sociology*). I have termed efforts to assemble these expectations the process of *normatization* (Turner 2002a, b, 2008). This process is greatly facilitated by embedding of encounters in corporate and categoric units, which provide the more general cultural framework for individuals to normatize the encounter, and as they do so, they often generate new cultural elements that put pressure to alter (a) the norms of the division of labor of corporate unit and perhaps the more general culture of this unit and (b) the expectation states for, and underlying status beliefs about, members of categoric units. Normatizing is essential because norms and expectation states are typically too general to cover the specifics of interaction in encounters. Indeed, if norms had to specify every contingency of interaction, they would be too complicated. Thus, individuals must, as they respond to each other and take cognizance of the structures and cultures in which an encounter is embedded, piece together a set of contingent expectations to guide interaction in encounters.

The first phase of this process begins with *categorization* where individuals assess which memberships in categoric units, if any, are salient and then draw from status beliefs and expectation states to assemble expectations for

individuals in various categoric units. At the same time, individuals are also taking cognizance of the nature of the situation in terms of the appropriate amount of ceremonial, work-practical, and social content that it should reveal, and to do so, persons rely on their assessment of each other's categoric-unit memberships, the structure of the status system in the corporate unit, and the norms attached to locations in the division of labor. Finally, they categorize the situation and others copresent in terms of the appropriate level of intimacy or lack thereof (Schutz 1967[1932]), using the information that facilitates categorization of each other and the situation. All other dimensions of normatization are also being assembled as categorization proceeds, but once categorization crystallizes, it greatly enhances and accelerates the assembling of expectations along the other dimensions of normatizing. Thus, if categorization is not successful, and individuals remain unsure about how to categorize each other and the situation, the other normatizing processes will be tentative and often awkward. Yet, when individuals cannot immediately and easily categorize others and the situation, they will seek to clarify the expectations along these other dimensions—that is, the appropriate forms of talk, rituals, framing, and emotions. In so doing, the implicit hope is to achieve clearer picture of expectations and, then, to backfill the process of categorization if it could not be firmly assembled at the very beginning of an encounter.

Normally categorizing constrains framing and forms of talk (both verbal and body language), but the reverse is possible: initial rituals and tentative forms of talk and body language can help establish frames for what information is to be included and excluded from the encounter and what forms of speech and body language are appropriate, and once these dimensions are assembled, they can facilitate categorization, if it had not been fully achieved and thus remained incomplete. As I noted above, rituals are useful in establishing other dimensions, but more typically, rituals become clear when categorization, framing, and forms of talk and body language have already been normatized. Yet, if they have not, then signaling in a highly ritualized manner can help normatize other dimensions. The emotions that can be aroused and displayed—what some (Hochschild 1979, 1983) have termed *feeling rules* and *display rules*—also need to be normatized, and often when situations are unclear, people pay especially close attention to what arouses positive and negative emotions as they tentatively work to normatize along other dimensions. But, if initial categorization, framing, language, and rituals have been established, then the feeling and display rules are typically clear.

This whole process I conceptualized as *culture making* and *culture taking* because individuals assemble expectations "on the ground" (culture making) by taking cognizance from the general culture of corporate and categoric

units as these serve as conduits for the movement of institutional and stratification cultures down to the level of the encounter (culture taking). This is a highly fluid set of processes, but culture taking and culture making are constrained by embedding of encounters in corporate and categoric units. When the culture of corporate and categoric units does not provide adequate information to normatize successfully, encounters will be stressful and potentially breached, thereby arousing negative emotions, and if this situation is chronic for chains of encounters, then the *anomie* of culture and the emotions aroused can, when experienced by most participates to encounters in corporate and categoric units, become part of the environment of meso-level sociocultural formations. Moreover, when normatization is not easy and individuals must work very hard at culture taking and culture making, it is very likely that needs for meeting transactional needs will not be met, thereby accelerating the pressure on corporate and categoric units.

Culture will remain detached and abstract, even though people carry norms, ideologies, and values in their heads, *until* they can make culture relevant by normatizing actual moment-by-moment interaction in encounters. And once situations are normatized and particularly if normatization occurs in iterated encounters within corporate and categoric units, it becomes somewhat institutionalized—granted, on a more micro level. As this process unfolds, the cultural environment of meso-sociocultural formations is increasingly built up from the micro level of social reality. The culture of the macro realm can thus only take on real force *when it is confirmed by normatization at the micro level*, and if micro processes lead persons to assemble culture in ways that contradict or, at least, deviate from the culture of the meso or macro realms, it is this micro-cultural environment that may exert more pressure than the macro-level environment, especially if this culture remains at odds with what larger numbers of individuals are assembling in many diverse and iterated encounters at the micro level.

Status Making and Status Taking in Encounters

Status plugs individuals into meso-level sociocultural formations. Status in a corporate unit is a location in the division of labor of this unit, and by virtue of this designated position, a person's relation with other locations in the structure is established. What are sometimes termed *diffuse status characteristics* (Berger et al. 1992; Webster and Foschi 1988; Wagner and Turner 1998) or, in Blau's (1977, 1994) terms, *parameters* are used to define people as members of a categoric unit. In all encounters, individuals are involved in the dual processes of status taking and making in order to

determine the status of others (status taking) or to assert the status that they are seeking to establish in the encounter (status making).

If these processes are successful, individuals know their respective places in the division of labor of corporate units and, thereby, the culture that they are to invoke during the process of normatization. In status making and status taking to determine individuals' respective categoric-unit memberships, the process is much the same, but an important initial step is to see *if* memberships in categoric units are, in fact, salient; if they are not, then the respective status locations of individuals in the divisions of corporate units become the default position. For both status and diffuse status characteristics, there are attendant expectation states attached to status. In corporate units, these expectation states are tied to the authority and prestige hierarchies, if any, in the unit; those with higher status are subject to different expectation states than those with lower status, with the dynamics of status-organizing processes revolving around whether or not people meet expectation states and whether the status of higher-ranked individuals is challenged or verified by lower-status persons (see volume 2 of *Theoretical Principles of Sociology* 2010b: 93–132 for a review of these dynamics). Much the same is true with diffuse status characteristics or memberships in categoric units, except that the dynamics here are somewhat more volatile because a diffuse status characteristic can carry a more intense moral evaluation, typically derived from the meta-ideology legitimating the stratification system. Individuals in devalued categoric units often exhibit *diffuse anger* over their evaluation, and persons of higher status need to step carefully and subtly in asserting their more valued membership, unless the status order in a corporate unit (a) reproduces the rankings of members of categoric units in its division of labor (or *consolidates* the ranking of categoric units with the hierarchies of the division of labor of a corporate unit) and (b) is legitimated by powerful norms sanctioning differential evaluation and treatment. If there is some *intersection* of status and diffuse status characteristics (i.e., they are not consolidated), however, the situation is more complex and individuals with rely upon normatization to assemble expectations states during the process of categorization (see Chap. 4 for details on the dynamics of consolidation and intersection of parameters marking categoric-unit memberships).

These negotiations over status are particularly important because status locations and memberships constrain, as noted above, all other micro-dynamic processes: (a) the degree to which and the manner by which transactional needs are to be realized by individuals, (b) the relevant culture from an institutional domain and the stratification system to be invoked and used in culture-taking and making to normatize an encounter, (c) the roles are to

be played (see below), (d) the meanings of ecological space and interpersonal demography (see below), and, most importantly, (e) the emotions that will be aroused (see below). Because status embeds individuals in corporate and categoric units and, by extension, institutional domains and stratification, status making and status taking are both central to the dynamics of corporate and categoric units, but the degree of success and acceptance of status making and status taking can also become part of the micro-level environment of these units. If status-organizing processes allow individuals to establish their respective status and if they are able or willing to accept their respective locations and memberships in the status order, then all other micro-dynamic forces can proceed in ways that, at a minimum, allow people to experience *satisfaction*. Satisfaction with the outcomes of status taking and making, coupled with (a) meeting transactional needs to a sufficient and expected degree, (b) normatizing successfully, (c) playing accepted roles, (d) using situational ecology appropriately, and (e) understanding the demography of the situation, will collectively generate a set of environments that facilitate the operation of status processes in meso-level units. If, however, status processes cause individuals to fail to meet transactional needs and to fail in normatizing, role making, and understanding situational ecology and demography, these status dynamics will arouse a variety of negative emotions. When these emotions are aroused collectively among larger numbers of individuals, they will create an environment that makes the current operation of corporate and categoric units problematic. The result is that these environmental pressures force alternations in the structure and culture of corporate and categoric units.

Role Taking and Role Making in Encounters

As George Herbert Mead (1934) emphasized, "taking the role of the other" or reading gestures to determine the dispositions of others, their propensities for behavior, and their evaluation of self is at the core of face-to-face interaction. Not only do individuals mutually *role-take* with each other, they also role-take with *generalized others*, a process that I have described as *culture taking* and normatization of the encounter. Role taking is greatly facilitated when individuals can successfully *status-take* and determine their respective locations in corporate and categoric units. The reciprocal of role taking is "the presentation of self" (Goffman 1959) to others by the conscious and unconscious orchestration of gestures that become the material that is implicitly assessed during role taking. Ralph Turner (1962) termed such presentations of *role making* as the reciprocal of role taking in that

individuals seek to "make a role for themselves" vis-à-vis the roles being made by others. Out of this mutual role taking and role making, individuals learn what is possible in an encounter, especially when these efforts are supplemented by active culture taking and making as well as status taking and making. Moreover, as these assessment processes ensue, individuals learn which, if any, transactional needs can be realized and to what degree.

As individuals mutually role-take and role-make, they begin to invest in roles, along several fronts. First, they may invest an identity in a particular role and, moreover, pull in other identities beyond role identities, such as a social or group identity or even a core identity. Second, they may invest other resources—time, energy, and emotions—into a role with the expectation of making a profit in the resources received from others. For interaction to succeed and for individuals to make a return on their investments in a role, they must have their roles *verified* by others (R.H. Turner 1962, 2001). When a role is verified—that is, determined by others to be appropriate for the situation—individuals are more likely to have the identities attached to their role-making efforts verified, and they are more likely to get a return on any other resources invested in the role.

Verification of roles is more likely to occur when a situation has been normatized through culture taking and making and when status locations and memberships in corporate and categoric units have been not only established but also accepted as appropriate by all participants to an encounter. And, as roles are verified in this way, they have reverse causal effects and make it more likely that transactional needs will be met, that the situation will be successfully normatized, and that status-organizing processes will proceed smoothly. As a consequence, individuals will experience positive emotions and develop commitments to each other as well as the culture and structure of the corporate and categoric units in which the encounter is embedded.

These emotions will then legitimate cultural symbols—that is, status beliefs, norms, expectation states, ideologies, and meta-ideologies—and reinforce the cultural environments of meso-level units. At the same time, positive emotional flows also reinforce the status order in corporate units and the parameters of categoric units, if salient in the situation. And the level of positive emotional energy increases even more when transactional needs are also realized. When culture and structure are reinforced, when need states are met, and when positive emotions circulate among most or all individuals in iterated encounters embedded in meso-level social units, the environment of these units is positively charged because it reinforces, legitimates, and increases attachments to not only the culture and structure of meso-level units but also the macro-level sociocultural formations in which these units are lodged.

The converse is also true. When role making and taking are not successful in verifying identities and in meeting other transactional needs, when the status order is not accepted, and when normatization remains problematic, negative emotions are aroused. And once aroused, they further disrupt these micro-dynamic processes. The result is that the environment of meso-level units becomes negatively charged, especially if role making and taking are chronically problematic over iterated encounters in meso-level units. When culture is unclear or not accepted fully, when key transactional needs are not fully met, and when the status order is challenged or unclear, the environment of meso-level units becomes unsupportive of meso-level sociocultural formations and requires that the culture and structure of corporate and categoric-unit change. A kind of micro-level anomie now exists and generates selection pressures on incumbents in corporate and members of categoric units to redouble efforts at adapting to this now hostile environment.

Situational Ecology and Demography

Encounters occur in space that is organized by boundaries, partitions, configured spaces, stalls, props, and territories (Goffman 1963, 1971). When these are embedded in corporate units, the meaning of each element of space is generally understood, allowing individuals to meet needs, establish status, play roles, and normatize encounters. Both focused (face-to-face interaction) and unfocused (avoidance of face engagement) are possible because individuals understand what they can and cannot do in the ecology of an encounter. They know what boundaries and partitions signal, who can adopt use spaces and when, what props mean and how they are to be used by whom, and what territories can be claimed by individuals and when. As the principles in volume 2 of *Theoretical Principles of Sociology* delineate, situational ecology constrains both focused and unfocused encounters, and when individuals follow the implicit rules of ecology, other micro-dynamic processes—meeting needs, normatizing, status-organizing processes, and role dynamics—are likely to operate smoothly.

Moreover, the ecology of space and its configuration also influences interpersonal demography: what persons and categories of persons are to be copresent, how they are supposed to migrate through space, what territories, props, and use spaces they can adopt, and when they can enter a territory and when they must leave. When the "right" categories of persons are present, when individuals honor rules of either face engagement or avoid-

ance of face engagement, when they display appropriate behavioral and interpersonal demeanor, and when they honor understanding of what each element of space means, behaviors, movements, and interactions in and through space proceed smoothly. Again, embedding in corporate units dramatically increases these understandings because these units will always carry the culture (norms and ideologies) of domains in addition to their own organizational rules.

Ecology represents a spatial environment for encounters and the divisions of labor of corporate units, and when the norms guiding individuals in space are unambiguous, individuals will generally use the elements defining space appropriately and derive low-level positive emotions like *satisfaction* and *pleasure* from the movement through and use of the elements organizing space. Thus, a low-intensity but nonetheless important flow of emotion is also being aroused by ecology, and this emotion also becomes part of the environment. In a quiet but fundamental way, then, these emotions legitimate the corporate units in which space is organized—whether this be a stroll down the street or walk through the park in a community, the entrance and movement through a shopping mall or its stores, a walk through the doors of a business, movement to and from a classroom, and virtually all corporate units organized in space. When the space is organized in ways that people understand and when there are implicit and explicit rules to govern activities in space, ecology can work to legitimate meso-level sociocultural formations. This effect is even more pronounced when the "proper" use of ecology by the "proper" people occurs. Space also signals who can and should be copresent and how they should comport themselves, and when individuals in the appropriate status positions in the division of labor of corporate units and/or members of "appropriate" (however, fairly or unfairly) are copresent in space and navigate space in normatively acceptable ways, space provides important promptings for how to normatize, meet needs, status-make and status-take, and role-make and role-take. Again, the result is the arousal of low-intensity positive emotions that give extra energy and legitimacy to the meanings of space and interpersonal demography.

The converse is also true. When the meanings of space are unclear, when the "wrong people" use space inappropriately, and when individuals have trouble using and moving through space, negative emotions are aroused, and the environment of both corporate and categoric units becomes stressful. If, for example, teenagers become aggressive and noisy in a mall or a park, others are forced to adapt to an unpleasant environment and, if such behavior is chronic, to abandon the corporate unit(s) organizing the space in this "inappropriate" manner, thereby undermining implicit understanding about

who is to be present and use this space. Thus, as corporate units build up the ecology organizing individuals and as they develop ecology with understanding of the demography of who is to enter and use this space, they can create an environment which, if rules are followed and enforced, can stabilize the environments of corporate units and, indeed, legitimize their operation. Alternatively, if they *cannot* impose rules or enforce those intended for organizing encounters in space, then the ecology of situations creates an environment that can undermine the legitimacy and viability of both corporate and categoric units.

Complaints about panhandlers in city centers, ethnic gang movements in neighborhoods, crowding that cannot be controlled, long lines and waiting for simple services, presence of inappropriate categoric units, violations of norms about noise, inappropriate movements across space (e.g., young skateboarders in crowded areas), too much pushing and shoving because of overcrowding, public intoxication, and other "inappropriate" behaviors by "inappropriate" categories of persons or individuals from the "wrong" corporate units (e.g., gangs) will arouse negative emotions. And these negative emotions can become rather intense and delegitimize the corporate units organizing this space, forcing them to engage in corrective action if they can.

Thus, because actions all must occur in space and take into account situational demography, the processes involved in navigating situational ecology and demography are critical to producing and reproducing a viable micro-social order. This order can easily be undone when ecology is disrupted and the demography of individuals (i.e., numbers of person copresent, their movements in space, and their membership in categoric units) violates previous understandings about situational ecology. And, as these micro dynamics are disrupted, so are other dynamics revolving around meeting needs, establishing status, and playing roles. The consequence is the arousal of negative emotions—*anger*, *fear*, *frustration*, and *sadness*—that can dramatically change the environment of corporate units where understandings about situational ecology and demography breaks down. Calls for restoring "public order" are directed at restoring previous rules about the ecology and demography of public places in community corporate units. Indeed, as protestors learned long ago, the easiest way to disrupt corporate units is to violate rules of ecology and demography, and when disruptions and violations of the rules of ecology and interpersonal demography increase as part of the normal operation of a corporate unit or units, the viability of the units becomes problematic, and the units will need to make significant adjustments to the new negative environment.

The Arousal of Emotions

People respond emotionally to all situations. And, when a large proportion of incumbents in corporate or categoric units experience the same emotions, this collective energy becomes a critical element of the environment of meso-level social units. Emotions are aroused under two basic conditions: (1) meeting expectations or failing to do so and (2) experiencing positive or negative sanctions. When individuals meet expectations and/or receive positive sanctions, they will experience positive emotions built from the primary emotion of *satisfaction–happiness*, whereas when people fail to meet expectations and/or are subject to negative sanctions, they will feel a range of negative emotions revolving around *assertion–anger*, *aversion–fear*, and *disappointment–sadness* (Turner 2002a, b, 2008, 2010b).

When individuals experience emotions, whether positive or negative, they will make attributions about their causes. In encounters, there are a variety of targets for causal attributions: (a) self, (b) others, (c) encounter, (d) units in which encounters are embedded (i.e., corporate and categoric units), and (e) macro-level sociocultural formations (institutional domain, stratification, society, or intersocietal system). Emotions and attribution dynamics reveal either a (1) proximal bias or (2) distal bias (Lawler 2001; Turner 2002a, b, 2008). Positive emotions evidence a *proximal bias* with individuals likely to see themselves as the cause of their positive emotional experiences and to see others in the encounter or the encounter as whole as the cause of their positive feelings. The result is that attribution for positive emotions stays at the micro level rather than migrating out and targeting meso- and macro-level sociocultural formations. In contrast, the arousal of negative emotions reveals a *distal bias* with individuals more likely to make attributions to the meso-level sociocultural formations and, sometimes, more macro-level formations as causes of negative emotional arousal. People do so to protect self; to blame oneself is painful or to accuse others as being the cause of negative emotions invites counter-negative emotions from others. And so, if a person's desires that others in the encounter verify various one more identities, it is less costly to blame more remote structures for negative feelings. Also facilitating the operation of this distal bias in attribution dynamics is the activation of defense mechanism that leads individuals to repress in various ways negative self feeling, with the consequence that identities and self will be protected when attributions move away from self. Yet, repressed emotions will intensify and often transmute into other emotions, and when they eventually break through the cognitive censors, they come out as a more extreme emotions that target meso- and macro-level structures (Turner 2008, 2011).

The operation of this distal bias for negative emotions increases the likelihood that negative emotions will target corporate and categoric units and, by extension, the institutional domains and the stratification system in which these meso-level units are embedded. It is far easier to blame the structure and culture of a corporate unit or members of a devalued categoric unit (e.g., Jews, Arabs, The West) for negative emotional arousal. Thus, as individuals fail to meet transactional need states, to normatize the encounter, to status-take and status-make, to role-take and role-make, to understand and navigate successfully situational ecology, and to deal with situational demography, they are more likely to make external attributions and, as they do so, they create a negatively charged environment for meso-level units.

The proximal bias for positive emotions also has effects on the environments of meso-level units because attributions are more likely to stay micro in most cases, with the result that the meso level is often not held as responsible for positive emotions that people feel. Yet, we know that people do make external attributions for their positive feelings because they legitimate more remote sociocultural formations and develop commitments to these formations (Turner 2008; Lawler et al. 2009). The general condition under which positive emotions begin to go external and target meso- and macro-level sociocultural formations is when encounters embedded in meso units *consistently* lead to the arousal of positive emotions. Under this condition, the power of the proximal bias is broken, and attributions begin to move outward as individuals recognize that the structure in which encounters is embedded is also responsible for positive feeling. As these positive emotions collectively move outward, they generate an environment that reinforces and legitimates corporate and categoric units, while also increasing individual commitments to these more distal social units.

Still, the operation of the proximal and distal biases makes it *more* likely that when negative emotions are aroused, they will first target the meso level, thereby negatively charging the environments of these meso-level units. Conversely, it will take longer for positive emotions to move to more distal targets because individuals must consistently experience a high rate of positive emotional arousal across iterated encounters for the power of the proximal bias to be broken. These dynamics, then, almost ensure that the environments of meso-level units will be charged, at least some of the time, by negative emotions when people's expectations are not met and/or they experience negative sanctions.

Many of the expectations in encounters are set up by transactional needs (especially those for identity verification and profits in exchanges), culture (ideologies, norms, status beliefs, expectation states), status taking and making, role taking and making, and situational demography and ecology.

People generally expect these dynamics to flow smoothly, and as a result, they will become emotionally aroused when they do not. Moreover, in addition to any direct negative sanctions experienced, the failure to meet expectations is often seen by people as a negative sanction. As people make attributions for these negative emotions, they not only target meso-level units but also develop beliefs (often inaccurate) about why they feel the corporate unit to have failed them and why members of targeted categoric units are to blame. Indeed, these beliefs explaining negative emotions are often the beginnings of counter-ideologies that may fuel conflict or the formation of new social movement organizations (see Chap. 8). Thus, the arousal of negative emotions alters the valence and intensity of the energy not only in the environment of meso-level units but also in the cultural environment. And, if both the emotional energy and culture of the environment change, they force meso units to accommodate the new environment or to work at shifting the valences of emotions toward the positive end of the negative–positive continuum.

Conclusions

Understanding the micro environments of meso units is important because it is at the level of the encounter that emotional energy—whether positive or negative—is generated. Micro-dynamic forces push individuals to act in particular ways, and they do so within the constraints imposed by corporate and categoric unit and, by extension, macro-level institutional domains and stratification systems. But, people are not robots that are totally programmed by culture and social structure; they are driven by specific processes unique to humans and the micro domain of reality, and so they create a micro environment that pushes back on meso dynamics from below, just as macro dynamics pushes down on the meso level of social organization from above. There is rarely a perfect synchronization of these forces pushing on corporate and categoric units, and so, the dynamics of the meso realm involve an effort by actors to cope with these often contradictory pressures from macro dynamics and micro dynamics. It is these efforts that make the meso realm so critical to understanding the social universe, and indeed, as I will emphasize, this is where much of the critical action is in human societies.

We are now ready to pursue the goal of this third volume of *Theoretical Principles of Sociology*: the analysis of the sociocultural formations of the meso realm, with an eye to their dynamic properties that can be summarized as a series of highly abstract propositions. These principles can only be

developed, I believe, by recognizing that macro- and micro-level dynamics create environments to which the structures of the meso realm—categoric and corporate units—must respond. In the next chapter, I will address the dynamics of categoric units, and then in Chaps. 5, 6, and 7, I will examine the three basic types of corporate units—groups, organizations, and communities. Then, in Chap. 8, I will examine social change, particularly social change generated by the dynamics of categoric units as they lead to the formation of social movement corporate units to effect social change in societies, not just at the meso level but also across the full spectrum of macro-level sociocultural formations.