

# Community and social structure

[Sociology](#), [Community](#)



The idea of people being social in nature can be clearly illustrated by the groups, or communities that one sees all around them. Groups of individuals share a common perspective of what reality consists of, this is known as culture (Charon, 1997). This reality is perceived through our interactions with others in the group and by what our position is within that group (Charon, 1997). The way in which we see the world is in a sense limited by both our position and our interactions. In order to actually fill your position in the group you need to have a working set of ideas and concepts to get the job done (Charon, 1997).

This working set of ideas is actually formed by the interactions that you have with other people who have the same position as you. It works for everyone else, and therefore you can't just randomly choose another set of concepts and ideas and expect them to work, so you choose the ideas, concepts, and means that your peers use (Charon, 1997). For instance, if you are a Chemist, you obtain knowledge and perspectives consistent of your environment, i. e. chemistry, you would not learn a great deal about molecular biology because those concepts and ideas are not useful to you.

We don't have a complete picture of everything around us because we perceive only the things which fit into our social structure (Charon, 1997). Reality is not a Velcro Nerf dart toss of facts and ideas, but rather a magnetic selection of those facts and ideas which are conducive to our pre-constructed structure. To one man power and riches are the greatest thing to achieve, but to a bum the oiliest thing is to have a warm place to sleep (Coleman, 1982: 207). It's unfortunate that these concepts can be utilized by a dictator to gain control and power for his own ideas and concepts.

Hitler was just such a man, he used a social construct known as patriotism, that is, sense of pride and connection with everyone within a society. Hitler rallied people by the droves claiming economic bloom, and prosperity for all if they submit to the organization, and promised death to any that were not within that organization. He kept them thinking the same thoughts, holding the same beliefs, and striving towards a common cause, and six million Jewish people gave their lives up for not being part of his concept of community.

The German people believed in the concepts and ideas because Hitler was going to bring them prosperity once he got rid of those niggardly Jews. When someone is told to electrocute another person to train them to respond with positive answers only, they take it as their role to do so without questioning, even if the shock was strong enough to be lethal (Meyers, 1970). Such was the case in a study done in North Carolina (Meyers, 1970). It illustrates how we are socialized to be an equal member of the community.

We do and believe that which is necessary to fulfill our role in the community, and so our perspective is that of our communities. Charon, 1997) In short, we all are socialized into the people we become, and we only associate with people that are socialized in a similar manner as ourselves (Charon, 1997). Those that are similar form a community and teach new members of the community what their status quo is through example and explicit instruction. And this is what makes us social in nature, that we rely on others to justify ourselves, this need for acceptance leads us to alter our perspective to match that of those we wish to be accepted by.

The social structure being what it is, there is a situation in which ones community can be very limiting. Take the homeless for example, a homeless person has ragged clothes, no address, no phone number, sometimes no identification, and no resources for obtaining these(Coleman, 1982). A homeless person would need a job to get the necessary components needed to get a job, and so they have restricted life chances(Coleman, 1982). The homeless learn this and limit themselves further by believing that their position is the only one they can hold, and have no choice(Coleman, 1982).