

INSTITUTIONAL LIFE

Radical memes and proverbs reduce all of human experience to a one-dimensional political realm of meaning. Harold D. Lasswell provides a wide comprehensive range of institutions human beings have created for themselves. (direct quotes follow)

The model utilized here proposes categories of reference to the shaping and sharing of outcomes (values) by employing practices (institutions) that in the context are relatively specialized to each value. The revised social process model reads as follows:

Participants → seeking to maximize values (gratifying outcomes) → utilize institutions → affecting resources.

(The arrows may also run the opposite way in order to emphasize interaction.)

Value	Example
Power	Victory or defeat in fights or elections
Enlightenment	Scientific discovery, news
Wealth	Income, ownership transfer
Well-being	Medical care, protection
Skill	Instruction, demonstration of proficiency
Affection	Expression of intimacy, friendship, loyalty
Respect	Honor, discriminatory exclusion
Rectitude	Acceptance in religions or ethical associations

It may be clarifying to spell out the point that these outcome events, in common with all events in a social process, are interactions. To receive power is to be supported by others; to give power is to support others. To receive enlightenment is to obtain knowledge of the social and natural context; to give enlightenment is to make such knowledge available to others. To obtain wealth is to receive money or other claims to the use of resources for production or consumption; to give wealth is to transfer money or claims. [snip] Receiving and giving may be further supplemented or complicated by refusing or withholding. In any case an interaction can be summed up as *value indulgent* or *value deprivational* for the participants. To be indulged is to occupy an improved position in the social process; to be deprived is to occupy a worsened position.

Harold D. Lasswell, *A Pre-View of Policy Sciences* (New York: American Elsevier, 1971, pp. 18, 20.

RADICAL ETHICS

Radicals intent on overthrowing Western power structures have their own guiding ethical principles. The set adopted by progressive democratic is that provided by Saul Alinsky. (direct quotes follow)

1. That one's concern with the ethics of means and ends varies inversely with one's personal interest in the issue. Inversely, one's concern with the ethics of means and ends varies inversely with one's distance from the scene of conflict.
2. The judgment of the ethics of means is dependent upon the political position of those sitting in judgment.
3. In war the end justifies almost any means.
4. Judgment must be made in the context of the times in which the action occurred and not from any other chronological vantage point.
5. Concern with ethics increases with the number of means available and vice versa.
6. The less important the end to be desired, the more one can afford to engage in ethical evaluations of means.
7. Generally success or failure is a mighty determinant of ethics.
8. The morality of a means depends upon whether the means is being employed at a time of imminent defeat or imminent victory.
9. Any effective means is automatically judged by the opposition as being unethical.
10. You do what you can with what you have and clothe it with moral garments.
11. Goals must be phrased in general terms like "liberty, Equality, Fraternity," "Of the Common Welfare," "Pursuit of Happiness", or "Bread and Peace."

The organizer, the revolutionist, the activist or call him what you will, who is committed to a free and open society is in that commitment anchored to a complex of high values. These values include the basic morals of all organized religions; their base is the preciousness of human life. These values include freedom, equality, justice, peace, the right to dissent; the values that were the banners of hope and yearning of all revolutions of men, whether the French Revolution's "Liberty, fraternity, Equality," the Russians' "Bread and Peace," the brave Spanish people's "Better to die on you feet than to live on your knees," or our Revolution's "No Taxation Without Representation." [snip] Democracy is not an end; it is the best political means available toward the achievement of these values. (pp. 46-7)

Saul Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals* (New York: Random House, 1971), pp. 24-47.

DOMINATING

Attaining a dominate position can take a number of forms, but they boil down to three: power, authority, and influence. (direct quotes follow)

If contemporary political science terminology is poverty-stricken, everyday language represents an embarrassment of riches. [snip] . . . our day-to-day experience throws up a host of terms which describe in implicit detail a vast range of qualitatively different relationships: manipulation, guidance, counseling, pressure, hypnosis, suggestion, extortion, blackmail, coercion, advertising, instructing, commanding, demanding. Each of these terms serves a dual function, on the one hand giving an empirical account of the relationship and on the other conveying a normative evaluation of it. (p. 7)

If you do X, I will do Y,
where X and Y may each be either positive or negative. It is to communications which involve either threats or promises that I . . . attach the name *power*. (p. 21)

If you do X, *you* will do (feel, experience, etc.) Y
(second-person contingent statement).
If you do X, He (God) will do Y
(third-person contingent statement).

In place of a threat or promise, influence involves a kind of *prediction* in the form of advice, encouragement, warning, and so on.

. . . authority is a communications-relationship expressed as an order or command. Although there may be sanctions available to the "author" of this communication, they remain "in the distance." The command is accepted not because of the sanctions but because the command itself is viewed as "legitimate" in terms of a set of belief called "credenda." Individuals learn an authority "credo" through a multifaceted process of "political socialization" which varies in substance if not technique according to the types of authority: traditional, charismatic, and rational-legal. In theory, "pure" authority is always "successful." The subject assumes that the command issued by an authority is capable of "reasoned elaboration" in accordance with the credenda, and thus he obeys automatically. In practice, it is difficult to know precisely what role the belief in legitimacy plays in the overall complex of possible motivations for obedience. This brings us to the problem of the "failure" of authority. (p. 56)

David V. J. Bell, *Power, Influence, and Authority* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975).

WORLDVIEWS

Ideas are never stand-alone thoughts but always part of a person's or society's world view. They derive their meaning from the subject's intentions combined with the subject's horizon. There are a number of key features of any world view. (direct quotes follow)

A worldview contains a person's answers to the major questions in life.[snip] Worldviews function much like eyeglasses. The right eyeglasses can put the world into a clearer focus . . . [snip] Worldviews contain at least five clusters of beliefs, namely, beliefs about God, metaphysics (ultimate reality), epistemology (knowledge), ethics, and human nature.

God. The crucial element of any worldview is what it says or does not say about God. . . . Does God exist? What is God's nature? Is there but one God? Is God a personal being, that is, is he the kind of being who can know, love, and act? Or is God an impersonal force or power?

Metaphysics. What is the relationship between God and the universe? Is the existence of the universe a brute fact? Is the universe eternal? [snip] Is the world best understood in a mechanistic (that is, a nonpurposeful) way? Or is there purpose in the universe? Are miracles possible?

Epistemology. Can we trust our senses? What are the proper roles of reason and sense experience in knowledge? [snip] Are our intuitions of our own states of consciousness more dependable than our perceptions of the world outside of us? Is truth relative, or must truth be the same for all rational being?

Ethics. Ethics is more concerned with the question of why [an] action is wrong. Are there moral laws that govern human conduct? What are they? Are these moral laws the same for all human beings? Is morality subjective . . . or is there an objective dimension to moral laws that means their truth is independent of our preferences and desires?

Anthropology. Are human beings free, or are they merely pawns of deterministic forces? Are human beings only bodies or material beings? Or were all the religious and philosophical thinkers correct who talked about the human soul or who distinguished the mind from the body? If they were right . . . what is the human soul or mind, and how is it related to the body?

Ronald H. Nash, *Life's Ultimate Questions* (Michigan: Zondervan, 1999), pp. 13-17.