

## Culture and KM

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## Three Kinds of Attributes

- ▶ For every group and for the organization as a whole, we can distinguish analytical attributes, structural attributes, and global attributes.
- ▶ **Analytical attributes** are derived by aggregating them from information describing the members of a collective (a group or a system).
- ▶ **Structural attributes** are derived by performing some operation on information describing relations of each member of a collective to some or all of the others.

## Three Kinds of Properties (Two)

- ▶ Lastly, ***global attributes*** are based on information about the collective that is not derived from information about its members.
- ▶ Instead such attributes are produced by the group or system process they characterize, and, in that sense, may be said to "emerge" from it, or from the interactions constituting it.
- ▶ These distinctions were originally introduced by Paul Lazarsfeld in the 1950s

## Analytic Attributes

- ▶ GNP
- ▶ GNP/Capita
- ▶ Per Capita Income
- ▶ Average Salary
- ▶ Total Sales
- ▶ Sales Per Sales Rep.
- ▶ Number of Accumulated Vacation Days
- ▶ Number of Lost Work Days due to Injury

## Structural Attributes

- ▶ Extent of inequality of training
- ▶ Extent of inequality of knowledge base distribution
- ▶ Extent of inequality of knowledge access resource distribution
- ▶ Extent of inequality of knowledge dissemination capability
- ▶ Extent of inequality of power
- ▶ Intensity of Conflict Behavior
- ▶ Intensity of Cooperative Behavior
- ▶ Ratio of e-Messages Sent to e-Messages Received by an agent

## Emergent Global Attributes

- ▶ Value Orientations (reflected in social artifacts)
  - Achievement Orientation
  - Self-realization Orientation
  - Power Orientation
  - Mastery over Nature
  - Lineality (preference for a hierarchical style in social organization)
- ▶ Extent of democratic organization of the Knowledge Life Cycle
- ▶ Innovation Propensity (The predisposition of an organization to innovate)

## What is Culture?

- ▶ Here are some alternative definitions of culture summarized by John H. Bodley from a longer list of 160 definitions compiled in 1952 by the great anthropologists Alfred L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn.
- ▶ **Topical:** Culture consists of everything on a list of topics, or categories, such as social organization, religion, or economy
- ▶ **Historical:** Culture is social heritage, or tradition, that is passed on to future generations
- ▶ **Behavioral:** Culture is shared, learned human behavior, a way of life
- ▶ **Normative:** Culture is ideals, values, or rules for living

## What is Culture? (Two)

- ▶ **Functional:** Culture is the way humans solve problems of adapting to the environment or living together
- ▶ **Mental:** Culture is a complex of ideas, or learned habits, that inhibit impulses and distinguish people from animals
- ▶ **Structural:** Culture consists of patterned and interrelated ideas, symbols, or behaviors
- ▶ **Symbolic:** Culture is based on arbitrarily assigned meanings that are shared by a society
- ▶ As you can see there is great diversity in definitions of “culture.”
- ▶ The question is: is there a definition more or less consistent with previous usage and also useful for KM?<sub>8</sub>

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## What is Culture? (Three)

- ▶ Let's begin by asking whether we should define "culture" as an analytical, structural, or global attribute
- ▶ Culture is not an analytical attribute
- ▶ Culture is not an arithmetical aggregation of survey results or individual man-made characteristics
  - It is not the percent of knowledge workers who trust their fellows
  - believe in systems thinking,
  - believe in critical thinking, or
  - are favorably disposed toward knowledge sharing
- Why not? Because (a) culture influences behavior, statistical artifacts don't, and (b) the above attributes are social psychological, not cultural

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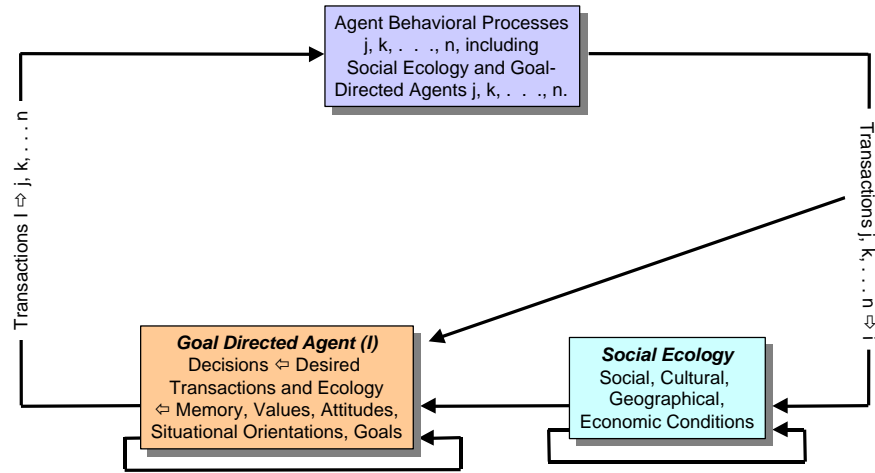
## What is Culture? (Four)

- ▶ Culture also should not be defined as a set of structural attributes derived from relations among individual level attributes
- ▶ Why not? Because “culture” refers to something comprehensive and regulative that accounts for and determines structure and also because if we define culture as structural in character we are assuming that we can model the structural relations defining culture
- ▶ Do we want to assume that or do we want to assume that culture is global in character and emergent?
- ▶ ***Culture (actually subjective culture) is the group’s characteristic set of emergent pre-dispositions to perceive its environment. It includes group level value orientations and attitudes and the relations among them***

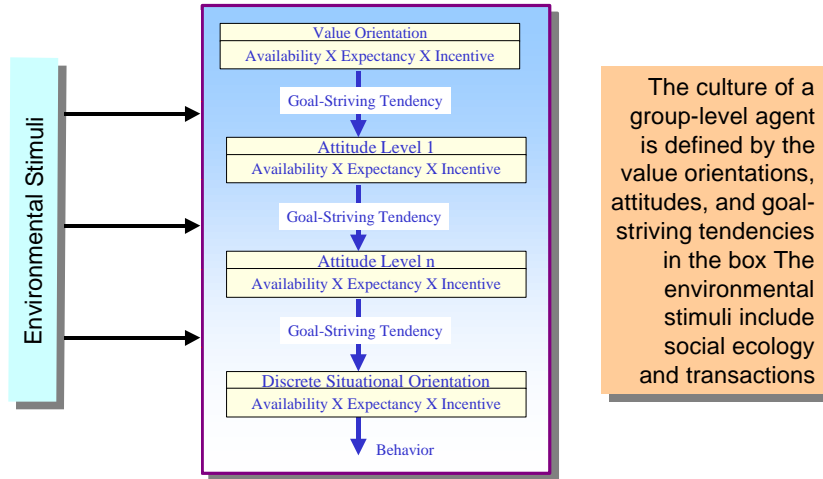
## Culture (Five)

- ▶ It is a configuration of global attributes that emerges from group interactions -- that is, from the organization of transactions among the agents within a group.
- ▶ It is an aspect of a group's social ecology, the cumulated effects of previous group interactions
- ▶ As such the perception of it by agents influences their behavior.
- ▶ Thus, culture affects behavior at two levels
  - It affects agents at the decision making level of interaction immediately below the level of the cultural group
  - It affects the behavior of the group itself by predisposing it toward behavior

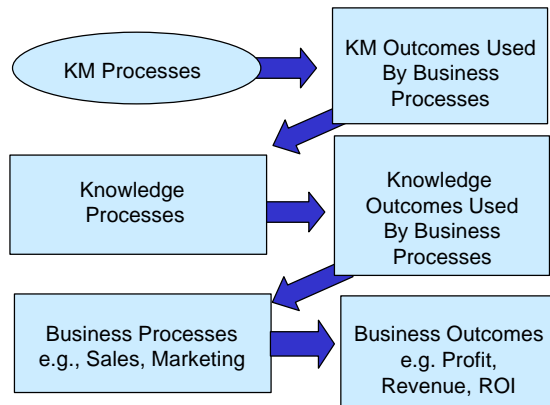
# Interaction Within a Group or Organization



# The Incentive System of an Agent



## KM In Context: Where's Culture?



KM Processes, Knowledge Processes and Business Processes are performed by agents. As we've seen, agents, if they're groups, have an internal culture. At the same time the cultural component of social ecology also impacts agent decisions. Finally, knowledge and KM processes produce culture. So culture is pervasive in KM. But many other factors also contribute to the complex interactions associated with it. So culture is not all there is to KM and there remain substantial problems in measuring its impact

**The End**