

5.1 Conflict and Strategy

Reading and Doing Ethnography
Social Anthropology 314

Terminology redux

- >> **Antagonism**: A structural situation that produces tension, contradiction, incoherence...
- >> **Hostility**: The affective and cultural state of being in antagonism.
- >> **Conflict**: The way hostilities are enacted.

Thus, structures of antagonism are experienced as hostility, which may culminate in conflict.

Conflicts (and antagonisms) produce strategies

A.O. Hirschman's famous typology:

- >> **Exit**: you leave the situation of conflict.
- >> **Voice**: you vocally protest the situation.
- >> **Loyalty**: you stick around and don't complain.

Students' strategies for improving marks

Given the structural antagonism between teachers and students:

- >> Activism against the rubrics (for easier assignments, etc).
- >> Collective non-compliance.
- >> Direct protest.
- >> Turning in work late (theoretically, this increases work time).
- >> Personal requests for sympathy (not necessarily groundless).
- >> Parallel appeals to different members of staff.
- >> Appeals to higher points in the hierarchy.
- >> Increasing investment in one's work.

A classification of students' strategies

- >> Changing the conditions of the game.
- >> Passive resistance (power presupposes compliance).
- >> Changing the *frame of social action* (from pedagogy to politics).
- >> Strategic rule violations (if gains outweigh consequences).
- >> Co-opting one's antagonist (the professor).
- >> Exploiting loopholes in the system.
- >> Recourse to institutionalized means of dispute resolution.
- >> Increased competition against one's peers.

Teachers' strategies for managing students

- >> Syllabus/formal guidelines.
- >> Giving good or bad marks.
- >> Accepting medical excuses.
- >> Presuming formality (writing student numbers by rote, citational habits).
- >> Deliberate informality ("You can call me firstname").
- >> Friendliness and warmth ("Great question!" "I completely agree!").
- >> "We can't do that, it would be impractical."

A classification of teachers' strategies

- >> Setting the conditions of the game.
- >> Direct punishments/rewards.
- >> Power to handle exceptions (to be flexible).
- >> Using habits and traditions in your favor.
- >> Departing strategically from habits or traditions.
- >> Conferring symbolic and emotional recognition.
- >> Co-opting students into the teacher's perspective.

A **social strategy** is a part-scripted, part-improvised procedure for getting things done in a social situation.

Notes on social strategies

- >> They are not purely *individual*. It's not just "free will."
- >> Nor are they completely rote or automatic. We're not robots.
- >> Strategies are multiple. There are almost always several to choose from.
- >> One's options are limited as much by culture as by power. You generally can't do something you can't imagine.

How does one make friends?

How does one negotiate street harassment?

Voice of Youth on eNCA – Street Harassment

Questions

- » Taylor used the conflict between the Priest and the agent as the groundwork for his article. Is this too make the article more easier to read and to show how his concepts and ideas can be applied?
- » Taylor: When researching true stories of the past, and researching the reasonings behind the success of either the priest or estate agent, does it help break down behaviors of those from different positions in modern day society today in Ireland?
- » Is it a fair comparison to say that mobility falls in the same vein as tradition? Power structures favor certain kinds of mobility/tradition that fit in their laws, but they can also act as ways of defying those laws.
- » Does social dramas and conflict form an important part in shaping a community? Is it easier to determine what a community will function through experiencing certain dramas and possibly finding solutions to avoid reoccurrence of such dramas and conflict?
- » How migrants or refugees are severely affected by ambivalence?

Questions

- >> What is the paradox in the case of mobility?
- >> When doing an ethnographic is it necessary to look at the economy and politics ?
- >> Wilson, has there and will there always be ambivalence of mobility in the Western Sahara?
- >> Wilson: It is right saying conflict attributes to social spaces if conflict endorses a greater, ambivalent mobility within opposing strategies?
- >> So, the state has power over mobility and migrants migrate to escape the authority over mobility, but why run away from one authority who has power over mobility and just fall into another?
- >> how would one go about studying mobility? It is such a huge concept.

Questions

- » How does Wilson's conversation about the restriction of mobility relate to the authoritarian governing style that is dominant in Africa?
- » What is apparent paradox that the historical juncture presents in terms of mobility according to Wilson?
- » What is meant by "desirable" forms of mobility? Is it when a country only welcomes migrants from certain countries (that are not in the global south)?
- » What is the difference between annexed and exiled? What are the different forms of mobility? Can we please discuss in class
- » Will refugees ever find a place to settle, seeing as they flee from their country of origin and they find themselves hated and shunned from the country they fled. What happens to them then? Or does it just become a cycle of statelessness?
- » could the notion of mobility be put into a more simplified notion?
- » Can an institution function without conflict?