

## AN UNOBTRUSIVE APPROACH TO VALUE ORIENTATIONS: A PRELIMINARY REPORT\*

Leila C. Ilan

The present study is exploratory in nature, designed to investigate the workability of a research methodology and a theoretical framework of values. First, it is an attempt to use an unobtrusive or a non-reactive technique; and second, it proposes to analyze or qualify rural values according to the patterns of value orientations formulated by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961).

### EXPLANATION OF THE APPROACH

#### *Use of unobtrusive or nonreactive technique.*

Invalidity of research data as a result of the test instrument used is a most formidable problem in any social science investigation. Numerous researches have been stimulated to discover sources of response distortions in social science test instruments such as questionnaires, scales, and interview schedules, and there is enough evidence to show that some test forms or techniques are more susceptible to distortions than others. Moreover, the role of the experimenter in laboratory experiments, or the participant-observer in anthropological studies, is often crucial. In the process of a scientific investigation, the researcher himself may metamorphose into a change agent or an innovator.

A number of the so-called unobtrusive or nonreactive techniques are cited by Webb, Campbell, Schwartz, and Sechrest (1966). These

techniques are opposed to the traditional and more common procedures of data gathering (e.g., questionnaires, attitude scales) in that, as the term *unobtrusive* or *nonreactive* implies, they should not in any way interfere with the event being measured. As with any technique he employs, however, the researcher is still burdened with the responsibility of exercising maximum objectivity in the interpretation of data.

Most unobtrusive techniques rely greatly on the researcher's sensitivity to cues and indices associated with particular human events or phenomena. For example, if one wanted to know the degree of popularity of a candidate, he could perhaps make a count of the campaign leaflets, billboards, etc. present in a certain area, instead of questioning the residents of the area. Or, if one wanted to know the drink preference of a certain family, whether "Coke" or "Pepsi," he might just count the empty bottles in the backyard, and so on.

The present study is designed to decipher value patterns, but not by asking the subjects what they value, since this could very well invite the risk of getting distorted responses. It has been observed that asking someone what he prefers or what he likes sometimes arouses uneasiness on the part of the interviewee. This is a classic problem. To evade this, patterns of preferences or values are derived without the awareness of the subjects. The units of analysis employed in this study come from ordinary conversations in relatively unstructured situations, such as in stores, during *karetela* rides, or on the street.

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In a barrio where practically everyone knows everybody else, conversations are a common occurrence. It does not take much effort to initiate a conversation, and once it starts, it flows easily, running through a wide range of issues. If one hangs around long enough in a corner store, for instance, he will soon pick up a sizeable amount of information or anything from domestic trivialities to national concerns, such as the recent elections, or even on international sensations, such as the Apollo voyages. Conversations usually reflect the speakers' preoccupations, feelings, dispositions and general outlook. In this regard, two assumptions are made. First, a strong verbal response can be observed with greater frequency and intensity. Hence, if a person has a problem, it is not surprising if he talks about this most of the time, either directly or indirectly referring to it. Second, in an unstructured situation, such as a corner store, there is a minimum inhibition to speak compared to the settings of town meetings, parent-teacher meetings, and other formal gatherings where one or more persons, usually authority figures, direct the conversations.

The decision to use conversations as data for analysis was inspired by works on streams of behavior (Barker 1963). Barker proposed that the behavior stream could be segmented into meaningful *behavior units*. A *behavior unit* is a natural part of the stream of behavior, as opposed to *behavior tesseræ*, which are artificially produced by an investigator's manipulation, such as responses gathered through the use of questionnaires, interview schedules, and similar techniques. Streams of verbal productions can be segmented or blocked, too, according to a time criterion. This can be illustrated in the following diagram:

The rows represent the various instances of conversations or streams of verbal productions while the columns refer to the segments according to time dimension. For example, a one-hour conversation may be divided into six segments of ten minutes per segment. This operational scheme can be treated experimentally, cross-culturally even, when sampling is sufficient.

*Framework for studying rural values.* A value system is a complicated network of cognitive and affective components. The various investigations on this subject matter show a variety of theoretical and operational frameworks. For the present study, the framework of Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) is used as a reference for analyzing the taped verbal protocols. The theory of value orientations recognizes universal dimensions of human problems which are spelled out in different cultures in different ways. Moreover, within a cultural system, there is a systematic variation of preferences or solutions to problems in the various life activities or behavior spheres. The authors articulate five generic areas of human problems: (1) the character of innate nature and super-nature (man-nature orientation); (3) the temporal focus of life (time orientation); (4) the modality of human activity (activity orientation); and (5) the modality of man's relationship to other men (relational orientation). Three alternatives or variations are postulated for each of these orientations (Table 1).

Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck constructed a research instrument which included four of the five value orientations (human-nature was not included), then tested and validated this in five American Southwest communities. The same instrument has also been used in Asian groups (Caudill and Scarr 1962, Japan; Liu 1966, Hong

Rows	Columns					
Conversation A	A <sub>1</sub>	A <sub>2</sub>	A <sub>3</sub>	A <sub>4</sub>	A <sub>5</sub>	A <sub>6</sub>
Conversation B	B <sub>1</sub>	B <sub>2</sub>	B <sub>3</sub>	B <sub>4</sub>	B <sub>5</sub>	B <sub>6</sub>
Conversation n	n <sub>1</sub>	n <sub>2</sub>	n <sub>3</sub>	n <sub>4</sub>	n <sub>5</sub>	n <sub>6</sub>

Table 1  
The Kluckhohn-Strodtbeck value-orientation scheme.

<i>Orientation</i>	<i>Postulated range of variations</i>		
1. Human-nature	Evil	Mixture of good and evil	Good
2. Man-nature	Subjugation-to-nature	Harmony-with-nature	Mastery-over-nature
3. Time	Past	Present	Future
4. Activity	Being	Being-in-Becoming	Doing
5. Relational	Lineality	Collaterality	Individualism

Kong; Stone and Nelson 1966, Sulu; Tan and Ilan 1968, Laguna). There is reason to believe that the value orientations and the postulated alternatives apply to a Filipino rural sample.

#### METHODS

##### *Subjects*

The subjects in the present study come from a small barrio in Laguna, referred to here as Barrio X. Barrio X is a fishing barrio situated along Laguna de Bay. However, a number of household heads also engage in farming for a livelihood. All in all the total number of participants included in the taped protocols is 114 adults. Since there was no direct verbal interaction between the experimenter and the subjects, there was no chance to obtain their biographical data.

##### *Procedure*

*Taping of conversations.* Conversations of people in three types of relatively unstructured situations (stores, streets, and karetela rides) were recorded with the use of a tape-recorder

for about three and a half months (August to early November, 1969). There were 31 continuous conversations with a total taping time of 830 minutes (average taping time was 26.6 minutes). There were no restrictions imposed on when to start and when to end taping. Usually the length of the tape determined the duration of the taping session. Moreover, the researcher could not replace a used tape in public for fear of arousing curiosity.

In Table 2 the distribution of taping sessions by site is shown.

Table 2  
*Taping sessions classified by site (Laguna Province barrio, 1969).*

<i>Site of session</i>	<i>No. of sessions</i>
Street	10
Karatela ride	15
Store	6
TOTAL	31

*Analysis of taped protocols.* Each of the taped conversation streams was divided into segments of 10 minutes. From each of the 31 conversation streams, one such segment was randomly chosen to be included in the final sample. The 10-minute segments were then scored qualitatively according to the postulated alternatives of Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck. Most of the

segments were categorized under two or more orientations.

#### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the qualitative analysis are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

*Thirty-one conversation segments (10 minutes each) classified by content, using the Kluckhohn-Strodtbeck orientation categories (Laguna Province barrio, 1969)*

<i>Orientation</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
<b>HUMAN NATURE</b>		
Evil	5	50%
Good and evil	3	30
Good	2	20
<hr/>		
TOTAL	10	100
<b>MAN-NATURE</b>		
Subjugation-to-nature	3	25%
Harmony-with-nature	5	45
Mastery-over	4	30
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TOTAL	12	100
<b>TIME</b>		
Past	5	16%
Present	8	28
Future	16	56
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TOTAL	29	100
<b>ACTIVITY</b>		
Being	8	38%
Being-in-Becoming	3	14
Doing	10	48
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TOTAL	21	100
<b>RELATIONAL</b>		
Lineality	13	50%
Collaterality	11	42
Individualism	2	8
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TOTAL	26	100

Inspection of the table shows some interesting trends:

1. *Human-nature orientation.* There seems to be a tendency to view human nature as inherently evil. For example, in one corner-store conversation, the people claim that the present social problems are due to man's natural liking to do evil.

2. *Man-nature orientation.* The three alternatives are almost equal although there is a slight tendency to prefer harmony-with-nature more. This would be best expressed in the sentiment of a number of subjects that whatever comes to one's life should be accepted gratefully; make the most of it.

3. *Time orientation.* In about half of the conversation segments, it could be sensed that the speakers in general have aspirations for a bright future. For instance, one woman could stand being separated from her husband who is presently working in Vietnam because this is the only means by which they can offer their children a better life in the future.

4. *Activity orientation.* It seems that there is not much difference between the "doing" and the "being" modalities of action. The conversations show that there are cases when people say they behave spontaneously or impulsively and without much consideration for the consequences of their actions. For instance, a woman complains that she could not follow a certain birth control technique simply because her husband would not exercise self-control. There are several subjects, however, who indicate that their activities are calculated to accomplish a material goal. For example, an old woman talks of how she made money out of her growing flowers in time for All Saints' Day.

5. *Relational orientation.* The conversations show that most of the subjects do not favor individualism. Respect for old age and cooperation among members of the same age group are valued.

The limitations of this descriptive and exploratory study do not warrant a conclusive remark. The researcher feels, however, that the unobtrusive approach has been effective. More conversations are being taped during the researcher's trips to Barrio X in hopes of the possibility of testing significant differences later on.

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