

FELT NEEDS AND SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

The study of history is the examination of **WHY** and **HOW** groups of people fulfill, or fail to fulfill their basic felt needs and the forces that shape those felt needs. The needs of each society can be reduced to five fundamental felt needs:

- 1. the need for order within the society**
- 2. the need for food, clothing, and shelter**
- 3. the need for protection from outsiders**
- 4. the need for communication**
- 5. the need for understanding the reality**

Each of the above needs corresponds to five different, but interrelated, social institutions respectively: **1. government 2. economy 3. foreign policy 4. culture 5. and cosmology.** Each institution is responsible for fulfilling one of these needs by providing *patterns of acceptable behavior and values that guide human action.* How these institutions relate to one another and how each institution fulfills its particular need is what makes each society unique. Thus, the historian must focus on every aspect of a society, both in isolation and in relation to one another.

History is the examination of WHY and HOW societies adapt, or fail to adapt, to their CHANGING felt needs.

A. Government creates and maintains order within that society.

- 1. SOVEREIGNTY** is the authority to make all final decisions.
- 2. POWER** is the ability to compel others to act.
- 3. INFLUENCE** is the ability to convince others to act.
- 4. LEGITIMACY** refers to the situation in which a people accept a government as just.
- 5. Functions of government (Montesquieu)**
 - a. legislative:** makes laws
 - b. executive:** enforces laws
 - c. judicial:** determines if laws have been broken
- 6. CONSTITUTION:** a set of fundamental laws and principle which define the powers and organization of a government

B. Economy provides for biological needs: food, clothing and shelter.

The study of Economics is the examination of **WHY** and **HOW** societies use their resources (e.g. land and minerals, wild and domesticated animals, labor [mental and physical], technology, and building materials), to produce and distribute food, clothing and shelter.

- 1. market:** the mechanism by which a society exchanges goods and services
- 2. property:** exclusive control of an object or idea
- 3. capitalism:** an economic system based upon private ownership of property
- 4. socialism:** an economic system based upon public ownership of property

C. Cosmology is responsible for understanding the relationship between humans and the reality (spiritual and material) around them.

1. Causation
 - a. Spiritualism
 - b. Materialism
2. Sources of Knowledge
 - a. Divine revelation
 - b. Science
3. faith: belief that cannot be proven
4. creed: a simple statement of belief
5. myth: stories used to express faith
6. rituals: the physical enactment of faith and myths

D. Foreign Policy responsible for protecting a community's vested interests from outside threats. The vested interest are the FELT NEEDS of a society.

1. Military: uses violence or threat of violence to interact with neighbors.
2. Diplomacy: uses negotiation to interact with neighbors

E. Culture is the myriad institutions which address a society's need for communication and for the transmission of values and knowledge to succeeding generations.

1. Value: object or idea for which a person or group is willing to sacrifice.
2. Socialization: the process by which values are taught to the next generation

F. Corruption: When an institution fails to fulfill the need it came into existence to address it is corrupt.

