

For Warner (1941), meanwhile, a community is essentially a socially functioning whole: a body of people bound to a common social structure which functions as a specific organism, and which is distinguishable from other such organisms. Consciousness of this distinction (the fact that they live with the same norms and within the same social organization) then gives community members a sense of belonging. So long as the parts of the functioning whole (families, agesets, status-groups, or whatever) work properly together, the structure of the community can be expected to continue over time.

Whether it be in terms of interests, ecology or social structure, then, anthropologists have traditionally emphasized an essential commonality as the logic underlying a community's origination and continuation. Communities have been regarded as empirical things-in-themselves (social organisms), as functioning wholes, and as things apart from other like things. This was in turn the logical basis of 'the community study': the tradition in anthropology of basing research on what could in some sense be treated as a bounded group of people, culturally homogeneous and resident in one locality, because this 'community' would provide a laboratory for the close observation of the interrelations, the continuing interfunctioning, between interests, sub-groups and institutions; and also serve as a microcosm of a bigger social picture which might prevail as societies grew in size and complexity. Anthropologists conventionally

studied communities (villages, tribes, islands) because these were regarded as the key structural units of social life: what the elementary structures of kinship gave onto; what the complex structures of society were composed of.