Sociology 1010  
Mon,Wed,Fri—1:00-2:50pm  
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Sociological Experience

In this paper, I am going to report about the different behaviors on opening doors among two

groups of people—that is people in US and people in Hong Kong.

In Hong Kong, people usually open doors for themselves and somebody they know only. They

seldom open doors for people that they do not know. If you open the door for strangers, they

will feel very strange or may even have a thought that you have some requests to them.

However, in US, people here are so nice. They always open the doors for anyone walking

behind them, whoever they know or they do not know. I have an experience that made me feel

so surprised and unforgettable. That is I went to a restaurant and a little girl was walking in

front of me. I guessed she was just about five years old at most. What was in my mind thinking

about was to open the door for the little girl. When I intend to walk a bit faster and open the

door for her, she just opened the door and let me go into the restaurant. The door was quite

heavy to her but she still tried her very best to hold the door and waited for me to go in. It

made me felt really surprised and I said thank you to her immediately. At that moment, I was

just imagining if this situation happens in Hong Kong, the little girl will not open the door, but

only standing in front of the door and wait for somebody else to open for her.

From this observation, I can really feel the difference culture of US and Hong Kong. People in US

emphasize about being ‘gentle’ much more than people in Hong Kong. Maybe it is because

people In US live more softly. But people in Hong Kong live in a faster and busier situation. They

are being rush at most of the time. So they do not have much time for holding the door and

waiting for the people behind to go in. (Maybe it is an excuse only).

I believe that is the differences in the norms and values between US people and Hong Kong

people. Based on the definition of value, it is the ideas of what is desirable in life. For US people,

their value to being gentle is very high, especially when compared with Hong Kong people.

Their norms is that people are expected to open the doors for people whoever walking behind,

no matter they are known or unknown. Although it is not strictly enforced, but if people do not

do so, they may be given a dirty look by others. This kind of norms is called ‘Folkways’.

In contrast, the value of individual is higher in Hong Kong. They emphasize less in the term of

‘gentlemen’. They serve themselves only at most of the time. To most of them, time is valued

significantly high. They do not prefer to waste time on holding the door and waiting for others

to go in. Their norm is that people only open doors for themselves is very normal. When there

is somebody opens doors for someone who do not know, others will guess he/she has some

requests or purposes. Only a few of people will think he/she is so nice.

Also, since both the ladies and men open doors for others, I believe the value of equality in US

is higher than in Hong Kong. In Hong Kong, we seldom see ladies open doors for men, they

have a thought that men should serve the ladies. So the role of men and ladies in US is a bit

different with those in Hong Kong.

In conclusion, from the observation on the different behaviors of opening doors among US

people and Hong Kong people, I learn that due to different living environments and educations,

people will have different cultures and behaviors. Their values and norms to different things

will not be the same.