

# CULTURE

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## Culture determines...

- Food we eat
- Clothing
- Music
- Games we play
- How to express emotions
- What is good or bad
- What is high or low culture (if any)

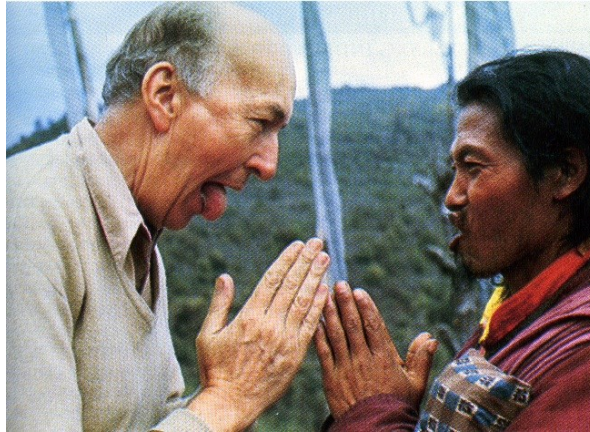
Culture determines...



Culture determines...



According to the informal norms of culture of the mountainous Asian kingdom of Bhutan, people greet each other by extending their tongues and hands



## Culture Determines...



## MEANING OF THE WORD CULTURE

- The word "culture" derives from a French term, which in turn derives from the Latin "colere," which means to tend to the earth and grow, or cultivation and nurture" (Cristina De Rossi)
- In this sense culture is the man-made environment and the people living in a society actually grow their way of life over time.
- Western culture, European culture, Pakistani culture, Pakhtoon culture etc

## INTRODUCTION

- Culture is the ways of thinking, the ways of acting, and the material objects that together form a people's way of life.
- Culture is NOT society-culture is a blueprint for how we live, think and act, while society is a group of people within a geographic area.
- **Culture** includes the traditions we inherit and pass on to the next generation
- **Culture**: totality of our shared language, knowledge, material objects, and behavior

## DEFINING CULTURE

- Culture ... is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, arts, morals, laws, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. (Edward B. Taylor ,1871:1)
- Culture is the ways of thinking, the ways of acting, and the material objects that together form a people's way of life (Macionis, 2012: 54).

## TYPES OF CULTURE

- **Material culture** a component of culture that consists of the physical or tangible creations (such as clothing, shelter, and art) that members of a society make, use, and share.
- **Nonmaterial culture** a component of culture that consists of the intangible human creations of society (such as attitudes, beliefs, and values) that influence people's behavior.

## Characteristics of Culture

- **Culture is learnt;** Culture is not inherited biologically, but learnt socially by man. It is not an inborn tendency. There is no cultural instinct as such culture is often “Learned ways of behavior”.
- **Culture is social;** Culture does not exist in isolation. Neither is it an individual phenomenon. It is a product of society. It originates and develops through social interactions. It is shared by the members of society.

## Characteristics of Culture

- **Culture is shared;** Culture in the sociological sense, is something shared. It is not something that an individual alone can possess. For example, customs, traditions, beliefs, ideas, values, morals etc. are all shared by people of a group or society.

## Characteristics of Culture

- **Culture is transmissive;** Culture is capable of being transmitted from one generation to the other. Parents pass on culture traits to their children, and they in turn to their children, and so on. Culture is transmitted not through genes but by means of language. Language is the main vehicle of culture.

## Characteristics of Culture

- **Culture is dynamic and adaptive;** Though culture is relatively stable it is not altogether static. It is subjected to slow but constant changes. Culture is responsive to the changing conditions of the physical world as it assists us to survive and adapt to the changes.

## Characteristics of Culture

- **Culture varies from society to society;** Every society has a culture of its own. It differs from society to society. Culture of every society is unique to itself. Cultures are not uniform.

## **Components of Culture**

- Values
- Norms
- Symbols
- Language

## Components of culture

**1. Values** – Collective concept of what is good, bad, desirable, proper, and improper and that serve as broad guidelines for social living.

- Values indicate what people find important and morally right (or wrong)
- Respect for parents, elders
- Cleanliness
- Generosity
- Values are broad principles that support beliefs.
- **Beliefs** are specific thoughts or ideas that people hold to be true.

Ten Core Values identified by Robin M. Williams, Jr. in the 1970's

Individualism (ability, work ethic, responsibility)

Achievement and Success (do better in life)

Activity and Work ("work in play," active lifestyle)

Science and Technology (expectations from...)

Progress and Comfort (goods, services, and necessities)

Efficiency and Practicality (bigger, better, faster things)

Equality (class equality and opportunity)

Morality and Humanitarianism (aiding others in need)

Freedom and Liberty (self explanatory)

Racism and Superiority (value group above others)

## Components of Culture

**2. Norms;** rules developed by a group of people that specify how people must, should, may, should not and must not behave in various situations.

- These are rules and expectations by which a society guides the behavior of its members.

## Components of Culture

- There are two aspects of norms...
  - **PROSCRIPTIVE**
    - should not and must not ; prohibited
    - Laws that prohibit us from driving over the speed limit
  - **PRESCRIPTIVE**
    - must, should, may ;prescribed like medicine
    - Persons making a certain amount of money are expected to file a tax return and pay any taxes they owe.

## Components of Culture

**a)Folkways** are informal norms or everyday customs that may be violated without serious consequences within a particular culture.

- norms of routine or casual interaction (ex. Shaking hands, eating styles, saying excuse me)

## Components of Culture

### b) **Mores** –(pronounced MOR-ays)

- Mores norms that are widely observed and have great moral significance\*. Often breaking norms lead to being outcast or imprisonment (ex. Incest, rape, murder) are strict norms that control moral and ethical behavior.
- **Laws\*** are formal, standardized norms that have been enacted by legislatures and are enforced by formal sanctions.

Because mores are based on cultural values and are considered to be crucial to the well-being of the group, violators are subject to more severe negative sanctions/ punishments (such as ridicule, loss of employment, or imprisonment) Laws may be

Law- Written codes that control the behaviour of people;

**Laws** may be either civil or criminal. Civil law deals with disputes among persons or groups while Criminal law deals with public safety and wellbeing.

## Components of Culture

#Taboos are mores specifying what actions are prohibited in a culture.

Taboos are mores so strong that their violation is considered to be extremely offensive and even unmentionable.

- **Taboo** meaning a culture absolutely forbids them.
- Eating human flesh - cannibalism
- Incest

Taboos for Muslims:

Eating pork

Gambling

Consumption of Alcohol/ intoxicants

# Components of Culture

## 3. Symbols:

A symbol is an object, word, or action that stands for something else.

- Symbol is anything that carries a particular meaning recognized by people who share a culture (a flag, a word, a flashing red light, a raised fist, an animal etc).



- Pakistani flag: The green color represents Islam and the Muslim majority in Pakistan and the white stripe represents the minorities. In the center, the crescent and star symbolize progress and light respectively.

- Symbols help us communicate ideas. A siren is a symbol that denotes an emergency situation and sends the message to clear the way immediately.
- Symbols mean different things to different people, which is why it is impossible to hypothesize how a specific culture will symbolize something. In European culture the color black has come to symbolize death and is worn at funerals. In other cultures, Asian for example, white often symbolizes death and is worn at funerals.

- Non-verbal gestures can be very “symbolic” and diverse.

In Argentina, rotating one’s index finger around the front of the ear means “You have a telephone call,” but in the United States it usually suggests that a person is “crazy” (Axtell, 1991). Similarly, making a circle with your thumb and index finger indicates “OK” in the United States, but in Tunisia it means “I’ll kill you!” (Samovar and Porter, 1991).



1. Peace Symbol: A Dove
2. Peace Symbol: anti-nuclear emblem
3. Health Care
4. A nazar is an eye-shaped amulet, Turkish believes that it protects against the evil eye.

#### **4. Language:**

- Culture is the social heritage of the humans that is transmitted to the future generation mainly through language.
- Language is a system of words and symbols used to communicate with other people. Language is a set of symbols that expresses ideas and enables people to think and communicate with one another.
- Verbal (spoken) language and nonverbal (written or gestured)
- Language help us describe reality.

- High Culture and Popular Culture:
- High Culture is the pattern of cultural experiences and attitudes that exist in the highest class segments of a society.
- People often associate high culture with political power, wealth, prestige and aesthetic taste. E.g: attending a live musical programme, joining golf club etc.

Events / way of life in high culture can be expensive and formal.

- Popular Culture refers to the pattern of cultural experiences and attitudes that exist in mainstream society.
- Unlike high culture, popular culture is known and accessible to most people.

- **Cultural Relativism;** the belief that the behaviors and customs of any culture must be viewed and analyzed by the culture's own standards.
- One cannot judge anyone else or another culture as these standards vary according to culture, time and situation.

No practice is universally good or bad, goodness and badness are relative not absolute.

We should not judge other cultures' beliefs and behaviors until we have a thorough understanding of why they act and believe as they do, based on a clear understanding of their history, religion, technology, and environmental situations.

- Ethnocentrism; the tendency to judge other cultures according to the norms and values of our own culture.
- Ethnocentrism is based on the assumption that one's own way of life is superior to all others.

# Culture and Related Concepts

## IDEAL VS REAL CULTURE:

There is sometimes a gap between cultural guidelines (values) and actual behaviour. This gap exists at a bigger level between ideal culture and real culture.

**Ideal culture** includes the values and norms that a culture claims to have. It involves an idealized, uncompromising value system that dictates perfect behavior.

Ideal values are absolute; they bear no exceptions. Using ideal culture as a standard, you are either right or wrong.

## Culture and Related Concepts

**Real culture** can be observed in our social life. Real culture shows how individuals actually live and act.

Example: It is commonly imagined or claimed that the our joint family system is providing care and respect to the elderly parents (ideal culture), but in reality many have moved away from their parental homes leaving their elderly parents alone ( real culture)

## Culture and Related Concepts

- SUBCULTURE:
- A subculture is a category of people who share distinguishing beliefs, values, and/or norms that set them apart in some significant manner from the dominant culture.
- It shares in overall culture of the society but also maintain a distinctive set of values, norms, lifestyles, traditions and even a distinct language\*.
- Sub culture may reflect a social and ethnic difference.

\* Subculture differs from dominant culture but not in opposition to that culture. a smaller cultural group within a larger culture

Examples:

1. Based on ethnicity: Pakhtoon, Pujabi, Sindhi, Balochi culture ( subcultures) within Pakistani culture(dominant)
2. Sometimes based on religion:

- COUNTERCULTURE:
- Some subcultures actively oppose the larger society.
- Subculture is a group whose values, beliefs, and lifestyle conflict with those of the dominant culture.
- A counterculture is a group that strongly rejects dominant societal values and norms and seeks alternative lifestyles (Yinger, 1960, 1982).
- Examples: Mafia involved in drug trafficking,
- Drug abusers and addicts

Basically, countercultures exist with the purpose of changing dominant culture.

## Culture and Related Concepts

- **CULTURAL LAG** ; the term was coined by William F. Ogburn, an American sociologist in 1922.
- Material culture tends to develop and advance at a faster rate than non-material culture. A gap between the technical development of a society (material culture) and its moral and legal institutions (nonmaterial culture) is cultural lag.
- The term cultural lag refers to the notion that non-material culture takes time to catch up with technological innovations, and that social problems and conflicts are caused by this lag.

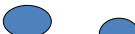
technology can spread through society in a matter of months, but it can take generations for the ideas and beliefs of society to change.

It refers to the gap when a new item of material culture is introduced and when it becomes an accepted part of nonmaterial culture.

## Is photography Halal or Haram?



## Culture Shock

- Culture shock is a feeling of dislocation, of being out of place in a new culture.
  - Culture shock is the term we use to describe the feelings of confusion and uncertainty that are experienced when you come into contact with a culture that is vastly different from your own.
  - Culture shock can be commonly seen in foreign students, immigrants and refugees.
  - Suddenly, you find yourself unable to understand, communicate, and function effectively.
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Persistent feelings of uneasiness, loneliness, and anxiety that occur when a person has shifted from one culture to a different one

## IMPORTANCE OF STUDY OF CULTURE FOR A SOCIAL WORKER

## Cultural Competence vs. Cultural Awareness

- Cultural competence:  
The ability to effectively operate within different cultural contexts
- Cultural awareness:  
**S**ensitivity and understanding toward members of other ethnic groups

## SOURCES OF CULTURAL COMPETENCE

- A professional social worker become familiar with backgrounds of client groups with whom (s)he works with
  - research literature
  - visit the cultural community
  - interview key respondents
  - become participant observer

## CULTURAL COMPETENCE

- It is very much important to study about the culture for helping professionals such as social workers.
- “cultural competence”— understanding the specific culture, language, social and economic distinctions of particular people and families—more important than ever.

The NASW *Code of Ethics* refers to cultural competence in section 1.05

- **1.05 Cultural Competence and Social Diversity**
- (a) Social workers should understand culture and its function in human behavior and society, recognizing the strengths that exist in all cultures.
- (b) Social workers should have a knowledge base of their clients' cultures and be able to demonstrate competence in the provision of services that are sensitive to clients' cultures and to differences among people and cultural groups.

- It can be argued that effective care is impossible without a working knowledge and understanding of a person's or group's culture and background.
- A social worker with cultural competency is in a position to serve better (even as an outsider) by understanding and accepting the diverse beliefs, norms and values of local culture .

- Culturally competent social workers are also better able to address issues of gender and help persons with disabilities, older adults, and transgender people.
- A working knowledge of these groups' cultures and values helps social workers tailor care so it is effective and appropriate for their clients' needs.