

Culture: A Framework for the Individual

What is Culture?

Culture consists of

Material Culture → items within a society that you can taste, touch or feel

Which includes concepts such as

Symbols & Language → Universal Grammar, Cultural Transmission

...and

Nonmaterial Culture → nonphysical products of society: Gestures & Values

Norms → Mores, Folkways, Taboos

The Study of Culture Is influenced by

Ethnocentrism, Xenophobia, Xenocentrism and Cultural Relativism

And should focus on Various Types of Cultures

Ideal Culture → the values to which a culture aspires

Real Culture → the way people actually behave

Subcultures → subsets of the dominant culture that have distinct values, beliefs, and norms

Counterculture → subcultures whose values and/or beliefs are in opposition to the dominant group

And might discuss

Multiculturalism → concept that supports the inherent value of different cultures in a society

Assimilation → process by which minority groups adapt to the dominant culture

Closer look at Material Culture

One category of culture is material culture: items within a society that you can _____, _____, and _____. The jewelry, art, music, clothing, architecture, and crafts a society creates are all examples of material culture.

Example of Material Culture

While seven countries (US, Japan, Russia, Canada, Germany, France & UK) use more than 46% of the world's electricity and oil, these countries combined hold only about 12% of the world's population.

What do these statistics tell you about their material culture?

You would likely stumble across many cars, air conditioners, heaters, blow dryers and modern conveniences.

Closer look at Nonmaterial Culture

Nonmaterial culture consists of the _____ products of society, including our symbols, values, rules and sanctions.

Nonmaterial Culture: Symbols

_____ represent, suggest, or stand for something else. They can be _____, _____, or even _____, and they often represent _____ or _____ concepts.

Nonmaterial Culture: Language

_____ is a system of _____ and/or _____ used to convey _____ and _____. Some languages exist only in the _____.

_____, while other languages are expressed through both _____ and _____ systems.

All cultures use some form of language.

Languages

There are more than _____ different languages on the planet. Due to _____, _____, and failure to _____ some languages, about half of these are in danger of _____. Two main factors determine the number of speakers of a language: _____ and _____.

Nonmaterial Culture: Universal Grammar

_____ suggests that human beings' ability to use language comes from common roots. All language contain what Chomsky calls a "_____". This term refers not to particular _____ but the way in which language is constructed. The subject of a sentence generally is found at the beginning of the sentence.

Nonmaterial Culture: Cultural Transmission

Culture often passes from one generation to the next through language → _____. Thanks to cultural transmission, you can use the information others have learned to improve your own life. Cultural transmission also helps spread _____. _____ not only advances our knowledge; it also brings us together by helping us create _____, or agreement. Language is inherently _____: it serves as a tool for sharing memories, making plans, and building relationships.

The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis

Whorf & Sapir suggested that language and thinking patterns are directly connected. Sapir & Whorf reached the conclusion, known as the _____, after studying many different languages and the people who spoke them.

Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis Proposes:

The difference in the _____ parallel _____ of the people who speak the languages. The _____ strongly _____ the speaker's _____.

Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis in Real Terms

Imagine the English language did not have words for left, right, backward, forward. Would you still be able to understand these concepts? Probably not.

Ongoing research into the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis suggests that because language influences _____, it also influences _____.

Nonmaterial Culture: Gesture

Another symbol system that differs by culture is _____. _____ are symbols we make using our bodies, such as facial expressions, hand movements, eye contact, and other types of body language. A gesture's symbolic meaning can vary widely between cultures.

Nonmaterial Culture: Values

_____, part of a society's nonmaterial culture, represent cultural _____ by which we determine what is good, bad, right, or wrong. Sometimes, these values are expressed as _____ or _____ that teach us how to live. _____ are capable of growth and change, so it is possible for a culture's values to change over time.

Value Pairs, Clusters & Conflict

_____ help us define values, usually in terms of opposites. For every positive value, we have a negative one. We may also hold values that support or contradict our other values. _____ are two or more values that support each other. Let's say you value both equality and tolerance; these values form a value cluster because they are similar concepts that _____ each other. When two or more values are at odds, however, a _____ occurs. For example, equality and racism are conflicting values.

Cultural Etiquette

Visit <http://www.culturecrossing.net/> on your phones.

Select 6 countries not already mentioned so far and find **two examples** of cultural etiquette that you find the **most strange or interesting**. Write your findings on a piece of paper with your name on it!

Culture: Norms

How can people uphold and enforce values in everyday life?

They might develop rules for appropriate behavior based on those values, called _____. Norms are conditional, can vary from place to place.

Example of a Norm

The way you behave at a football game is certainly different than how you behave at a funeral.

Our _____ are linked to the situation.

It is normal to cry at a funeral, and not so acceptable to cry at a football game unless your team got spanked!

Culture: Sanctions

Norms provide the justification for sanctions. A _____ is a prize or punishment you receive when you either abide by a norm or violate it. If you do as you are supposed to, you get a _____; if you break the rules you get a _____.

Sanctions: Formal vs. Informal

Most sanctions are _____, like when your friend rolls her eyes at your terrible joke. However, if we violate a law or some formal written rule, we receive a _____ negative sanction. Sanctions are both _____ and _____, can reinforce values by rewarding people who hold those values and punishing those who have opposing values.

Examples of Positive Sanctions

A person who performs well at his or her job and is given a salary raise or a promotion is receiving a positive sanction. When parents reward a child with money for earning good grades, they are positively sanctioning that child's behavior.

Examples of Negative Sanctions

Imprisoning a criminal for breaking the law, cutting off a thief's hands for stealing, and taking away a teenager's television privileges for breaking curfew are all negative sanctions.

Folkways, Mores, Taboos, OH MY!

_____ are _____ types of norms. They provide a _____ for our behavior and are based on _____ . Because they are a _____ type of norms, the sanctions applied are less severe. *For example, if you see a person struggling with packages, you will hold the door for him or her. If you let the door slam on the person, you might be considered rude, but won't go to jail.* Folkways are often _____ that, when violated, call for minor _____ negative sanctions if any at all.

Mores (pronounced MORE-eyes)

Although folkways are informal norms, _____ are more serious.
_____ are norms that represent a community's most
_____. _____ is an
act that is _____.

Examples of Mores & Taboos

If you murder a person, you've violated one of society's mores. People who violate mores are given a particularly serious type of formal negative sanction.

In this way, mores can be considered the basis of _____ in a society.

Acts that lead us to feel revulsion, such as murder itself are taboo.

The Study of Culture

When you study culture it's a good idea to consider whether a particular behavior or event is a _____, or common to all cultures. *For example, funeral rites are a cultural universal because all cultures have methods of disposing of the dead.*

Micronesia Case Study

Bronislaw Malinowski witnessed a funeral ritual in which native islanders ate part of the dead person to maintain a connection. After eating, they would vomit in an attempts to create distance from the deceased.

Ethnocentrism & Cultural Relativism

When studying culture from a sociological perspective, you must not allow your personal biases to complicate your understanding (Weber).

Ethnocentrism

_____ occurs when a person uses his or her own culture to judge another culture. Nearly all people in the world are ethnocentric, but ethnocentrism is potentially dangerous to sociologists because it can lead to incorrect assumptions about different cultures.

Xenophobia

_____ refers to fear and hostility toward people who are from other countries or cultures. When the United States entered World War II after Japan bombed Pearl Harbor in 1941, people in the US began to fear Japanese Americans and locked many in internment camps.

Xenocentrism

Not all personal biases result in a negative view of foreign cultures.

Sometimes, we engage in _____ when we perceive other groups or societies as superior to our own.

Cultural Relativism

Thinking like a sociologist means striving to practice cultural relativism when studying other cultures.

_____ consists of a deliberate effort to appreciate a group's ways of life in its own context, without prejudice. Philosophers sometimes refer to this effort as normative relativism because it bases the evaluation of a society on that society's own norms.

Examples of Normative Relativism

In some Islamic countries, women are not encouraged to seek education. Within the context of these countries, this practice could be interpreted as a normal function of that culture. However, if women in the US were not granted an education, the practice would seem unfair because it would violate US cultural norms.

Criticisms

Some people, however, argue that there are universal human values that are standards by which we should evaluate cultures. According to this argument, women in every culture should be educated, and any culture that does not allow this is inferior and exploitive of women.

Culture Lag

_____ happens when social and _____ changes occur at a _____ pace than _____ changes. This is often the case when _____ enters and changes a culture.

Culture Shock

Have you ever traveled to a foreign country and been stunned by how the culture differed from your own? If so, you were probably experiencing culture shock.

_____ occurs when a person encounters a culture foreign to his or her own and has an emotional response to the differences between the cultures.

Ideal versus Real Culture

Is there a difference between culture as we'd like it to be and culture as it really is? Often the answer is, YES.

_____ represents the values to which a culture aspires, and _____ represents a culture's actual behaviors.

Examples of Ideal & Real Culture

Our society aspires to equality, and yet a brief look at the data shows that minorities still suffer from inequality in the United States.

They experience more poverty, lower incomes, and less access to health insurance.

Subcultures

Groups with a common interest may form a _____. A _____ is a subset of the dominant culture that has distinct values, beliefs, and norms. In complex societies, subcultures allow people to connect with other people who have similar interests. *Churches, civic organizations, clubs and even online communities can become subcultures.*

Facebook Activity

Log on to your Facebook (if you have one, or look on with a friend)

Identify a group you belong to on Facebook.

Make a list of the values of that culture. What do those values tell you about that group?

Global Village?

In the 1960s, Marshall McLuhan popularized the term

“_____,” which refers to the “shrinking” of the world through immediate electronic communications. McLuhan’s work suggests that _____ and _____ differences are rapidly becoming irrelevant as a result of technology.

Virtual “Global Village”

Is technology really bringing people closer together?