

Principles of Culture



Culture Defined

- A way of life underpinned by particular values and traditions
 - The expression of those values and traditions through writing, music, visual and performing arts, or through rituals, festivals and the like.
 - The intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic development that distinguish humans from animals

Defining Folk and Popular Culture

- **Folk Culture:** Traditionally practiced by groups in homogeneous, rural, isolated areas.
- **Popular Culture:** Found in large, heterogeneous societies that share certain habits even if there is much diversity.

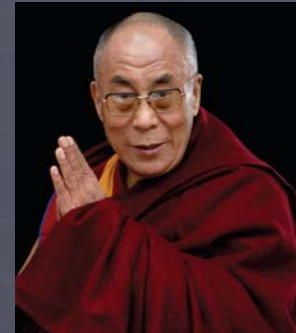
Cultural Isolation

- Spatial location makes contact with popular culture difficult
 - Located in high mountains, forests, deserts, or arctic regions
 - Prevents sharing of cultural traits



Threats to Folk Culture

- Loss of traditional values
 - Change in food, shelter, and clothing preferences because of exposure to popular culture
- Changes in culture can lead to controversy, especially in very religious places.
 - Ex. State Religious Affairs Bureau Order 5



Language and Gestures

- The verbal, and non-verbal ways that people communicate
 - Gestures are body movements and hand signals with specific meanings
- Strong connections to identity through language and even accent
 - Accents are regional variations in languages
 - Ex. The New York accent vs. the Boston Accent
 - Can be nationalistic
 - Ex. French people speak French



Religion

- The belief in and worship of a superhuman God (monotheistic) or Gods (polytheistic) with controlling power
 - Has an attached belief of an Afterlife
 - Typically combined with a moral code
 - Ideas of right and wrong



Government

- The series of rules and beliefs towards leadership which governs the people of a society
 - Laws – Systems of rules enforced by the government
- Different societies have different views about how the country should be governed and the traditions attached to it



Economy

- The different ways that a culture regulates and controls the exchange of goods and services
 - Ex. Traditional barter based economy vs. money based economy



Agriculture and Cuisine

Agriculture

- The farming practices a culture uses in order to feed members of its society
 - Ex. Western use of machinery and traditional family farms



Cuisine

- The different foods a cultural group eats, often with national connections to regional variations
 - Ex. Korean Kimchi



Sport/Sports and Recreation

- Sport/Sports – Physical activities or games either for fun or competition
 - Ex. Texas Football vs. Minnesota Hockey
- Recreation – Physical activities that are done for their enjoyment
 - Ex. Boating
- Used as a way to build bonds within a culture



Dance and Music

- Cultures differ in their connections to which music they listen to and how connected it is to dance
 - Ex. Dancing is a very large part of South American Culture
 - Ex. The connection between Country Music and rural areas of North America



Festivals/Holidays

- A day fixed by law or custom on which ordinary business is suspended in commemoration of some event or in honor of some person from a culture
 - Connected to religious or national origins



Etiquette

- The expected behaviors for someone living within the culture
 - Behaviors are actions and the reasons for doing them
 - Ex. Giving a bus seat to an elderly person out of respect



Architecture

- A particular way in which a society designs their buildings.
Can be cultural expression or practicality
 - Ex. Japanese “efficient” architecture vs. American “space” architecture for hotels



Work Ethic

- Societies differ on the value of how hard individuals within the society should be working. Some societies value a “hard day’s work” which can be described as individuals living to work, while others take move the viewpoint that individuals are working to live
 - Ex. Spanish siesta mid-day breaks vs. Japanese Dawn to Dusk work ethics



Gender Roles and Courtship

Gender Roles

- The perceived set of standards and actions for a male and a female within a society
 - Ex. Male Machismo in Latin America



Courtship

- The methods in which a member of a culture goes about in finding a mate
 - Ex. Practice of arranged marriages in India



Medicine

- The methods that different cultures use to heal their sick and wounded. Some cultures rely on modern technology and medicines to heal, while others use traditional methods such as prayer and rituals
 - Ex. Jehovah's Witnesses refusal to accept blood transfusions because of religious beliefs



Grooming and Dress

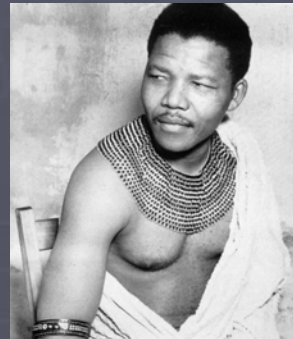
Grooming

- Cultural standards for cleanliness (bathing) and personal care (shaving, trimming, etc...)
 - Ex. Western women expected to shave legs



Dress

- The different clothes that people wear as connected to identity. Can be used as a type of cultural variation or conformity.
 - Ex. Traditional vs. Modern Dress



Technology

- Societies differ in how much they embrace new technologies or if they hold on to traditional methods. Some view foreign technologies as a burden and prefer a more simple life, while others embrace it as a helpful tool
 - Ex. The Amish rejection of most modern technologies

