





# Chapter 3

## Culture



Section 1

# **THE BASIS OF CULTURE**



# Culture and Society

- **Culture** → knowledge, values, customs and physical objects that are shared by members of a society
- Material side
- Nonmaterial side
- **Society** → a specific territory inhabited by people who share a common culture



# Culture and Heredity

- **Instincts** → innate (unlearned) patterns of behavior
- Why is culture more important than instinct in determining human behavior?
- How does heredity affect behavior?
  - **Reflexes** → automatic reaction to physical stimulus
  - **Drives** → impulse to reduce discomfort



# Sociobiology

- **Sociobiology** → the study of the biological basis of human behavior
- How do sociobiologists view human behavior?
- What are some of the criticism of sociobiology?
- Is there a middle ground?



Section 2

# **LANGUAGE AND CULTURE**



# Symbols, Language and Culture

- What are symbols?
  - **Symbols** → a thing that stands for or represents something else
- How are language and culture related?





# The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis

- Edward Sapir & Benjamin Whorf
- What can vocabulary tell you about a culture?
- Does the hypothesis of linguistic relativity mean we are prisoners of our language?
- What other factors help to shape our perception of reality?



- **Hypothesis of linguistic relativity** → theory stating that our idea of reality depends largely on language



Section 3

# **NORMS AND VALUES**



# Norms: The Rules We Live By

- **Norms** → rules defining appropriate and inappropriate behavior
- William Graham Sumner stated that anything can be considered appropriate when norms approve of it.



# Cultural Etiquette

Country	Custom
England/Scotland & Wales	Appointments are essential. You may be ten minutes late but not ten minutes early!
Greece	Be careful not to praise a specific object too enthusiastically or the host may insist on giving it to you.
Libya	If you are invited to a Libyan home for dinner, only men will be present. Take a gift for the host but not for his wife.
Senegal	Never eat food with the left hand, as this is considered offensive
Zambia	Avoid direct eye contact with members of the opposite sex—it may suggest romantic overtures
Saudi Arabia	It is an insult to sit in such a way as to face your host with the soles of your shoes showing.
China	A visit to a Chinese home is rare—unless the government has given prior approval



# Folkways, Mores, and Laws

- What are folkways?
  - **Folkways** → norms that lack moral significance
- What are mores?
  - **Mores** → norms that have moral dimensions and that should be followed by members of the society
  - **Taboos** → a rule of behavior, the violation of which calls for strong punishment
- How do laws differ from mores?
  - **Law** → a norm that is formally defined and enforced by officials



# Silly Laws Still on the Books

State	Law
Alabama	It is illegal for a driver to be blindfolded while driving.
Arizona	Hunting camels is prohibited
Florida	If an elephant is left tied to a parking meter, it still has to pay the meter fee
Illinois	Cannot contact the police before entering the city in a car
Iowa	Kisses can last for up to but not longer than 5 minutes
Maine	You must not step out of a plane in flight
Massachusetts	No gorilla is allowed in the back seat of a car
Minnesota	You may not cross state lines with a duck on your head
Vermont	Whistling underwater is illegal
Washington	It is illegal to pretend your parents are rich



# Enforcing the Rules

- **Sanctions** → rewards and punishment used to encourage people to follow norms
- What are formal sanctions?
  - **Formal sanctions** → sanctions imposed by persons given special authority
- What are informal sanctions?
  - **Informal sanctions** → rewards or punishments that can be applied by most members of a group





# Values– Basis for Norms

- What are values?
  - **Values**- broad ideas about what is good or desirable shared by people in a society
- Why are values important?

Sanctions

Are used  
to enforce

Folkways

Mores

Laws

Which are  
types of

Norms

That  
are  
based  
on

VALUES



# Basic Values in the United States

- Sociologist Robin Williams (1970) identified important US values:
  1. Achievement & success
  2. Activity & work
  3. Efficiency & practicality
  4. Equality
  5. Democracy
  6. Group superiority



Section 4

# **BELIEFS AND MATERIAL CULTURE**



# Beliefs and Physical Objects

- **Nonmaterial culture** - ideas, knowledge, and beliefs that influence people's behavior
- Why do beliefs matter?
  - **Beliefs**- ideas about the nature of reality
- What is material culture?
  - **Material culture** - the concrete, tangible objects of a culture
- How is material culture related to nonmaterial culture?



# Ideal and Real Culture

- **Ideal Culture** → cultural guidelines that group members claim to accept
- **Real Culture** → actual behavior of members of a group



Section 5

# **CULTURAL DIVERSITY & SIMILARITY**



# Cultural Change

- Why does culture change?
  1. Discovery
  2. Invention
  3. Diffusion





# Cultural Diversity

- **Social categories** → groupings of persons who share social characteristics
- What are subcultures and countercultures?
  - **Subculture** → a group that is part of the dominant culture but that differs from it in some important respects
  - **Counterculture** → a subculture deliberately and consciously opposed to certain central beliefs or attitudes of the dominant culture



# Ethnocentrism

- **Ethnocentrism** → judging others in terms of one's own cultural standards
- What are some examples of ethnocentrism?
- Does ethnocentrism help or hurt society?



# Cultural Universals

- **Cultural Universals** → general cultural traits that exist in all cultures
- How are cultural universals expressed?
  - **Cultural particulars** → the ways in which a culture expresses universal traits
- Why do cultural universals exist?



# Cultural Universals

Researchers have identified more than 70 traits in all cultures

## **Economy**

Clothing, Food, Shelter, Communications, Transportation, Business, Jobs, Services, Goods, Technology, Tools, Trade

## **Institutions**

Economy, Religion, Education, Government, Family

## **Arts**

Folk Tales, Crafts, Music, Theater, Dance, Literature, Art

## **Language**

Words, Expressions, Pronunciations, Alphabet, Symbols

## **Environment**

Communities, Geography, Geology, Habitat, Wildlife, Climates, Resources

## **Recreation**

Games, Toys, Arts, Media, Holidays, Festivals

## **Beliefs**

Values, Traditions, Ethnicity, Customs, Religions, Morals