

Culture Notes

- Culture is the learned behavior of a group that creates the basis for a group's way of life
- All humans have physiological functions:
 - Examples: eating, going to the bathroom, giving birth
- The “how” and “why” of behaviors associated with those functions are learned (cultural)
 - Examples: what they eat, how they eat, when they eat are all culturally based
- Taboos: behavior that is NOT culturally acceptable
- Culture is manifested in its traits, including:
 - Language – most important aspect of culture
 - Beliefs, religion, values, morals
 - Artifacts/possessions
- Culture complex is a group of interrelated culture traits
 - Example: a CAR represents:
 - Transportation
 - Sports
 - Status
 - Freedom
 - Entertainment
 - Rite of Passage
- All cultures have an area of origin (hearth)
 - Isolated cultures are Folk Cultures
 - Largely dependent on the natural world
 - Beliefs: Animistic Religions, attitudes towards women, etc.
 - Practices: Medicines, Taboos, Social Structure, Traditions, etc
 - Other: Music, Food, Housing, Folklore
- Culture has several “layers”
 - Bottom “layer” is the foundation based on folk culture
 - Represent the most important cultural traits and beliefs
 - Language = Cultural Identity
 - Beliefs, Values, Practices
 - EX. United States
 - American English, Noah Webster
 - Protestant Work Ethic
 - Liberty, Freedom, Individuality, Fairness
 - Upper “layers” are:
 - Innovated traits from new inventions, attitudes, beliefs
 - Cell phone
 - Diffused traits from other cultures
 - EX. United States
 - Foreign Words adopted

- Globalization: Traits that have diffused over a wide area of the earth.
 - Promotes uniformity in the built environment and visible culture
 - EX: Roads/highways are largely the same across the world
 - Airports and hotels have same look and feel in most countries
 - Technology and artifacts are readily adopted by most cultures
 - Communication systems: Cell Phones, Television
 - Medical Technology: vaccines, anti-biotics, hospitals
 - Values and beliefs may be adopted, but are change is slower (usually generational)
 - Cultures often adopt traits and fit them into their own cultural framework
 - Adopted traits are changed to be more consistent with local beliefs/values and tastes (Glocalization)
 - Businesses modify practices and products to fit local norms and tastes
 - Fast Food: McDonalds' menu is different in many countries
 - In Asian countries restaurants serve rice
 - In India McDonalds serves no beef
 - Israel's McDonalds are kosher (no cheeseburgers, pork products)
 - Media – Television and Movies
 - MTV operates in 165+ countries, and most have local programming
 - US has adopted British TV ideas like American Idol, The Office, Most of Gordon Ramsey's series.
 - Cultures often actively resist culture change
 - Languages are preserved, protected, and revived
 - Hebrew and Welsh were revived as cultures gained more autonomy
 - Taliban banned Western media and televisions
 - Cultural backlash often occurs when cultures clash
 - US Ambassador to Libya killed over depiction of Mohommad in an American film
 - Cultures often protest/riot/burn flags against US policies in their region