

- **4. Values**
- *Values* are collective ideas about what is right or wrong, good or bad, and desirable or undesirable in a particular culture.
- Values do not dictate which behaviors are appropriate and which ones are not, but they provide us with the criteria by which we evaluate people, objects, and events.
- Values typically come in pairs of positive and negative values, such as being brave or cowardly, hardworking or lazy.
- Since we use values to justify our behavior, we tend to defend them staunchly.

# What are core American values?

1. *Achievement and Success*
2. *Individualism*
3. *Hard Work*
4. *Moral Orientation*
5. *Humanitarianism (Charity toward Others)*
6. *Efficiency and Practicality*
7. *Progress*
8. *Material Comfort*
9. *Equality*
10. *Freedom and Liberty*
11. *Democracy*
12. *Nationalism-Patriotism*
13. *Science and Technology*
14. *Racism and Group Superiority*

- Also, there are emerging values:
  - 1. Leisure
  - 2. Self-fulfillment
  - 3. Physical fitness
  - 4. Youthfulness
  - 5. Concern for the environment
  - 6. Romantic love
  - 7. Education
- Other important American values may include:
  - Family, honesty, justice, religiosity, monogamy, and heterosexuality.
- Q: Any others?

## 5. Norms

- Values provide ideals or beliefs about behavior but do not state explicitly how we should behave.
- Norms, on the other hand, are established rules of behavior or standards of conduct.
- Norms are culture specific, as they can vary markedly from one society to another.
- *Prescriptive norms* state what behavior is appropriate or acceptable.
- By contrast, *proscriptive norms* state what behavior is inappropriate or unacceptable.
- Prescriptive and proscriptive norms operate at all levels of society, from our everyday actions to the formulation of laws.

- A. Folkways
- Norms are also classified according to their relative social importance.
- *Folkways* are informal norms (akin to etiquette) or everyday customs that may be violated without serious consequences within a particular culture.
- They provide rules for conduct but are not considered to be essential to society's survival.
- Often, folkways are not enforced; when they are enforced, the resulting sanctions tend to be informal and relatively mild.

- B. Mores
- *Mores* (pronounced MOR-ays) are strongly held norms with moral and ethical connotations that may not be violated without serious consequences.
- Since mores are based on cultural values and considered to be crucial for the well-being of the group, violators are subject to more severe negative sanctions than are those who fail to adhere to folkways.
- The strongest mores are referred to as **taboos**, which are mores so strong that their violation is considered to be extremely offensive, e.g., cannibalism and incest, both of which are examples of a nearly universal taboo.
- The sanctions are severe and may include prison, banishment, or death

- C. Laws
- *Laws* are formal, standardized norms that have been enacted by legislatures and are enforced
- When laws are violated, fines or prison sentences are the most likely negative sanctions, although in some countries the death penalty is handed down for certain major offenses.

# III. HIGH CULTURE AND POPULAR CULTURE

- Some sociologists use the concepts of high culture and popular culture to distinguish between different cultural forms.
- These ideal types are differentiated by their content, style, expressed values, and respective audiences.
- *High culture*, also referred to as “elite culture,” consists of classical music, opera, ballet, live theater, and other activities usually patronized by elite audiences, composed primarily of members of the upper-middle and upper classes, who have the time, money, and knowledge assumed to be necessary for its appreciation.



- Unlike high culture, *popular culture* is mass-produced and mass-consumed.
- Unlike high culture, popular culture is assumed to be far more widespread and accessible to everyone; for this reason, it sometimes is referred to as "mass culture."
- Popular culture consists of activities, products, and services that are assumed to appeal primarily to members of the middle and working classes.
- These include concerts, spectator sports, movies, mass-marketed books and magazines, large-circulation newspapers, and television soap operas.

- The primary purpose of popular culture is entertainment, but it also provides an avenue for people to express their hopes, fears, and anger.
- However, popular culture may also include racism, sexism, and nativism (hostility toward immigrants by native-born citizens).
- Popular culture plays a significant role in the formation of public attitudes and values as well as in shaping the patterns of consumption.
- The distinction between high and popular culture used to be wider, but the rise of a consumer society has made luxury items to become more widely accessible to the masses, which has greatly reduced the great divide between cultural activities of the elite and the masses.

## • **The Influence of Mass Media**

- Popular culture is characterized by mass distribution.
- Mass media, including the print, film, electronic media (radio and television) and the Internet, have extraordinary power to shape public information and perceptions.
- Television, for example, is a powerful force for transmitting cultural values.
- The majority of adults today get most of their news from TV.
- It is not an exaggeration to say that television is now the national religion of many countries.
- Television is the common basis for social interaction in a widely diverse national community.
- Also, it generally portrays the most homogeneous view of culture and is resistant to change.

- For most people in the world, leisure time is dominated by television.
- Most homes in Korea have at least one television and the average person watches television for 30 hours per week.
- The mass media also have enormous power to shape public opinion and behavior.
- For example, content analyses of news programs show that the largest percentage of time is spent reporting stories about crime.
- This can influence people's perception and fear of crime.
- Sociologists have found that people's fear of crime is directly related to the time they spend watching television or listening to the radio.

- Although people tend to think of the news as authentic and true, news is manufactured in a complex social process.
- It is not objective reality that determines what news is presented and how it is portrayed. Instead, it is commercial interests and the values of news producers that determine what becomes the news.
- The media shape the definition of social problems by determining the range of opinion or information that is defined as legitimate and by deciding which experts will be called on to elaborate on an issue.

- **Popular Culture and Leisure**
- Studying popular culture helps us understand fads, fashions, and leisure activities. It also gives us insights into how the commercialization of popular culture may provide wealth to those who produce and market it.
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- FADS
- A *fad* is a temporary but widely copied activity followed enthusiastically by large numbers of people.
- Most fads are short-lived novelties.
- Hallyu?

- Fads can be divided into four major categories.
- 1. *Object fads* are items that people purchase despite the fact that they have little use-value.
- E.g., pokémon games, toys, trading cards, and snack foods.
- 2. *Activity fads* include pursuits such as body piercing, "surfing" the Internet' and "blade nights" in New York City, where thousands of in-line skaters swarm down the city's streets in processions that are several blocks long.

- 3. *Idea fads*, such as New Age ideologies and the simplicity movement.
- 4. *Personality fads*, such as those surrounding celebrities like Tiger Woods, Michael Jordan, and Kim Yuna. Personality fads include a variety of deceased icons, such as Princess Diana and the singer Elvis Presley, who continue to receive media coverage and have fan clubs on the Internet.



# IV. CULTURAL DIVERSITY

- Cultures do not generally remain static, for there are many forces working toward changes and diversity.
- Some societies and individuals adapt to this change, whereas others suffer culture shock and succumb to ethnocentrism.

- **1. Cultural Change**
- Societies continually experience cultural change, at both material and nonmaterial levels.
- Such changes are often set in motion by discovery, invention, and diffusion.
- *Discovery* is the process of learning about something previously unknown or unrecognized.
- Today, discovery most often results from scientific research. For example, the discovery of a polio vaccine virtually eliminated one of the major childhood diseases.
- A future discovery of a cure for cancer or the common cold could result in longer and more productive lives for many people.

- As more discoveries have occurred, people have been able to reconfigure existing material and nonmaterial cultural items through invention.
- *Invention* is the process of reshaping existing cultural items into a new form. Guns, video games, airplanes, and First Amendment rights are examples of inventions that positively or negatively affect our lives today.
- When diverse groups of people come into contact, they begin to adapt one another's discoveries, inventions, and ideas for their own use.
- Cultures also change as the result of innovation, the creation of better or more effective products, ideas, processes, services or technologies.

- *Diffusion* is the transmission of cultural items or social practices from one society to another through such means as exploration, military endeavors, the media, tourism, and immigration.
- Although the direction of cultural diffusion today is primarily from the West to the rest of the world, cultural diffusion is not a one-way street. Examples?
- However, critics believe that some contemporary forms of cultural diffusion actually amount to *cultural imperialism*—the extensive infusion of one nation's culture into other nations.
- Some view the widespread infusion of the English language into countries that speak other languages as a form of cultural imperialism.

- When a change occurs in the material culture of a society, nonmaterial culture must adapt to that change.
- Frequently, this rate of change is uneven, resulting in cultural lag, which refers to the delay in cultural adjustments to changing social conditions.
- For example, rapid technological change is often attended by cultural lag given that some elements of the culture do not keep pace with technological innovation.
- The failure of nonmaterial culture to keep pace with material culture is linked to social conflict and problems in society.
- For example, the advent of stem cell research has given rise to many new, potentially beneficial medical technologies; however these new technologies have also raised serious ethical questions about the use of stem cells in medicine.
- Any other examples?