

- **2. SUBCULTURES**

- Subcultures are the cultures of groups whose attributes, values and norms of behavior are somewhat different from those of the dominant culture.
- This concept has been applied to categories ranging from ethnic, religious, regional, and age-based categories to those categories presumed to be "deviant" or marginalized from the larger society.
- In the broadest use of the concept, hundreds of categories of people living in Korea might be classified as participants in one or more subcultures.
- Q: Examples in Korea?
- Muslims in non-Muslim countries, motorcycle enthusiasts, bodybuilders, hip-hop culture, punk or heavy metal enthusiasts, etc.

- *Ethnic Subcultures*
- Some people who share a common racial, language, or nationality background identify themselves as members of a specific subculture.
- Examples of ethnic subcultures in Korea include the Chinese, Japanese, Americans, Canadians, Filipina, Vietnamese, etc.
- Although people in ethnic subcultures are dispersed throughout the country, a concentration of members of some ethnic subcultures is visible in the capital region.
- For example, Chinatown in Incheon, and a large number of Joseonjok living in the Daerimdong area in the Yeongdeungpo District in Seoul.

- By living close to one another and clinging to their original customs and language, first-generation immigrants can survive the abrupt changes they experience in material and nonmaterial cultural patterns.
- Ethnic subcultures provide opportunities for expression of distinctive lifestyles, as well as sometimes helping people adapt to abrupt cultural change.
- Ethnic subcultures can also serve as a buffer against the discrimination experienced by many ethnic or religious groups in Korea.
- However, some people may be forced by economic or social disadvantage to remain in such ethnic enclaves.
- Applying the concept of subculture to our study of social life helps us to understand how cultural differences may influence people. However, subcultural theory and research have been criticized for overstating the within-category similarities and making the assumption that most people primarily identify with others who are similar to themselves in ethnicity, religion, age, or other categories.

- **3. Culture Shock**

- *Culture shock* is the disorientation that people feel when they encounter cultures radically different from their own due to immigration or a visit to a new country, or to a move between social environments.
- Culture shock is a subcategory of a more universal construct called transition shock.
- Transition shock is a state of loss and disorientation predicated by a change in one's familiar environment which requires adjustment.

- **4. Ethnocentrism**

- Many of us tend to make judgments about other cultures in terms of our own culture.
- "One's own group is the center of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it" (Sumner, 1906).
- *Ethnocentrism* is the assumption that one's own culture and way of life are superior to all others.
- Ethnocentrism can serve a positive function in societies by promoting group solidarity and loyalty and by encouraging people to conform to societal norms and values.
- For example, nationalism and patriotism encourage people to think of their own nation as "the best" (the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup).

- On the other hand, ethnocentrism can be problematic for societies.
- Historically, people have regarded outsiders as “barbarians” or “primitive” because they were different.
- Ethnocentrism is counterproductive when it blinds us to what other groups have to offer or when it leads to conflict, hostility, and war.
- Ethnocentrism can be a problem within societies as well as between them when it leads to social isolation, prejudice, discrimination, and oppression of one group by another.
- A related concept is *xenophobia*, which is defined as “an unreasonable fear of foreigners or strangers or of that which is foreign or strange.”

- Recently, some sociologists have begun to study xenocentrism, or “reverse ethnocentrism.”
- Xenocentrism is the belief that the products, styles, or ideas of another society are better than those of one’s own culture.
- Examples include the desire for German-made cars by Koreans, many of whom assert that Korean manufacturers cannot make a decent car like the Germans.
- Q: Any other examples?

• **5. Cultural Relativism**

- An alternative to ethnocentrism is *cultural relativism*—the belief that culture must be viewed from the standpoint of those who live in a particular society.
- In other words, one culture cannot be arbitrarily judged by the standards of another.
- Franz Boas first articulated the idea in 1887: "...civilization is not something absolute, but ... is relative, and ... our ideas and conceptions are true only so far as our civilization goes."
- From this perspective, there is no inherently "right" or "wrong" values or norms, and we shouldn't regard our own culture as somehow better than others.
- Cultural relativism also has a downside. It may be used to excuse customs and behavior (such as violence against women and cannibalism) that violate basic human rights.

• **6. Multiculturalism**

- Today, a spirited debate asks whether we should continue to stress our historical traditions or highlight our cultural diversity.
- *E Pluribus Unum*, the Latin phrase that appears on each U.S. coin, means "out of many, one." This motto symbolizes not only our national political union, but also the idea that the varied experiences of immigrants from around the world come together to form a new way of life.
- Multiculturalism generally refers to acknowledging and promoting multiple cultures and subcultures.
- It seeks to protect and celebrate cultural variety and promote tolerance toward the cultures and people of different ethnic heritages.
- It also encourages immigrants to maintain various aspects of their ethnic heritage and maintain some of their traditional cultural attributes.

• **7. A Global Culture**

- Today, more than ever before, we see many of the same cultural patterns the world over.
- Walking the streets of Seoul, Tokyo, Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), Cairo (Egypt), and Casablanca (Morocco), we find jeans, hear well-known pop music, and see advertising for many of the same products we use at home.
- English is rapidly becoming the second language of most of the world.
- Are we witnessing the birth of a global culture?
- The world is still divided into some 200 nation-states and thousands of different cultural systems, but societies of the world now have more contact with one another than ever before, involving the flow of goods, information, and people.

- The global economy: the greater flow of goods
 - the extent of international trade has never been greater.
- Global communications: the flow of information
 - satellite-based communications now enable people to experience the sights and sounds of events taking place thousands of miles away—often as they happen.
- Global migration: the flow of people
 - more people migrate to live and work in other countries than ever before.
 - transportation technology
 - as a result, in most nations, significant proportion of people have been born elsewhere (25.8 million people, some 10.7 percent of the U.S. population, were born abroad).

- These global links have made the world's diverse cultures more similar, at least in superficial respects.
- And it is the U.S. that has come to dominate international mass culture.
- Despite the enormous diversity of cultures worldwide, fashions, foods, films, entertainment, and other cultural values are increasingly dominated by U.S. markets, thereby creating a more homogenous world culture.

- Are We Prisoners of Culture?
- The culture into which we are born influences our sense of who we are and what our goals in life should.
- "Culture regulates our lives at every turn; from the moment we are born until we die there is, whether we are conscious of it or not, constant pressure on us to conform to certain types of behavior" (Clyde Kluckhohn, 1962).
- But where does this leave human freedom? Are we simply the prisoners of our cultures?
- Culture sets certain limitations on our options and behavior, but it can't control us completely. If it did, there would be no cultural change.
- Culture provides general outlines for behavior, but people act in ways that break with tradition and generate change.
- Collectively, we continually modify culture.
- Culture is created, sustained, and changed by the acts of human beings, and that is the measure of our freedom.