

# The Concept of Culture

## Chapter 2

# Concept of Culture

- Culture – (Concept)
- Ember- (Text)
- “...the set of learned behaviors, beliefs, attitudes, values, and ideals that are characteristic of a particular society or population.”

# The Concept of Culture

- **Culture - (Concept)**
- ...the total, generally organized way of life, including values, norms, institutions and artifacts, that is unique to a given people and that is passed on from one generation to the next.
- ...everything that people have, think, and do as members of a society.

# Components of Culture

- Material Culture -
- (Artifacts of the culture.)
  
- Non-Material Culture -

# Components of Culture

- **Beliefs -**
- ...true or false assumptions which are shared.
- ...statements about reality that people accept as true.
- We use belief systems to: interpret our past, explain the present, predict the future.

# Components: Cont'd

- **Values -**
- ...an idea shared by the people in a society about what is good and bad, right and wrong, desirable and undesirable.
- (...usually emotionally charged and abstract.)

# Components: Cont'd

- **Norms** -
- ...expectations of how people are supposed to act, think and feel in specific situations.
- **Types of Norms:**
- Folkways
- Mores
- Laws

# Norms - Types

- **Folkways** -
- ...popular habits and traditions, a way of doing things that is customary, but not insisted upon.



# Norms - Types

- **Mores -**
- ...folkways which are held by common consent to be conducive to the welfare of society.

# Norms - Types

- **Laws -**
- ...guidelines for human behavior.
- ...that which must be obeyed and followed by citizens, subject to sanctions or other legal consequences.

# Components: Cont'd

- Sanctions -
  - ...any provision for regulating a norm.
- Language -
  - ...a system of symbolic communication that uses words which are sound patterns that have standard meanings.
- Artifacts - (Material Culture)

# Culture is Learned

- **Enculturation -**

...the process of social interaction through which people learn their culture.

...the immersion in a culture to the point where that particular design for living seems only natural. (Examples)

# Culture is Shared

As members of a society...we have shared assumptions about “things, idea, behavior.”

- **Ethnomethods -**

...the rules that people follow in everyday social interaction. (...behavior so taken for granted that they are not noticed unless they are disrupted.)

# Evaluating Cultural Differences

- **Ethnocentrism -**

...the belief that one's own culture is more desirable and superior to all others.

...the tendency to evaluate other cultures in terms of one's own culture, to consider one's own culture right and the other's wrong.

- **Cultural Relativism -**

- ...the notion that any part of a culture must be viewed in its proper cultural context rather than from the viewpoint of the observer's culture.

- ...the principle that every culture must be judged in its own terms.

# Cultural Universals

- ...those general cultural traits found in all societies of the world.
- ...essential behavioral characteristics of humans found in all societies.



# Cultural Universals

- What life experiences do all humans have in common?
- *Rituals-*
- What necessities do we all have and how are our needs met?
- *Institutions-*

# Cultural Universals

- Examples-
- Art, athletics, bodily adornment, cleanliness training, cooking, cosmology, courtship, dancing, division of labor, eschatology, family, folklore, food taboos, funeral rites, games, gestures, greetings, hair styles, hospitality, housing, hygiene, incest taboos, kin groups/terminology, language, law, ...

# Cultural Universals

- Examples – Cont'd
- luck superstitions, marriage, medicine, music, mythology, personal names, postnatal care, puberty customs, religious rituals, sexual restrictions, tool making, trade , visiting, weaning of young...

# Culture Shock

- Culture Shock -
- ...a psychological disorientation experienced when attempting to operate in a radically different cultural environment.
- Ranges from mild irritation to out-and-out panic. (Jamanawaha-psychosomatic illness to India-hostility)

# Culture Shock

- Symptoms-
- Sense of confusion over how to behave.
- Sense of surprise/disgust of new features.
- Sense of rejection/loss of self-esteem.
- Homesickness, withdrawal, irritability, exaggerated cleanliness, hostility, weeping, physical ailments.

# Life Shock

- Life Shock-
- ...refers to a single sudden experience that is so unexpected that one does not have any time to deal with it psychologically
- Results-
- ...the person vomits, faints, or becomes hysterical.