Essentials of Sociology 12th edition Henslin Solutions Manual

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Chapter 2: Culture

Learning Objectives

LO 2.1 Explain what culture is, how culture provides orientations to life, and what practicing cultural relativism means. (p. 40)

LO 2.2 Know the components of symbolic culture: gestures, langue, values, norms, sanctions, folkways, mores, and taboos; also explain the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. (p. 46)

LO 2.3 Distinguish between subcultures and countercultures. (p. 53)

LO 2.4 Discuss the major U.S. values and explain value clusters, value contradictions, value clashes, how values are lenses of perception, and ideal versus real culture. (p. 56)

LO 2.5 Explain what cultural universals are and why they do not seem to exist. (p. 60)

LO 2.6 Explain why most sociologists consider genes to be an inadequate explanation of human behavior. (p. 61)

LO 2.7 Explain how technology changes culture and what cultural lag and cultural leveling are. (p. 62)

REVEL Media

Module 2.1: Video: *The Basics: Culture*; Video: *The Big Picture: Culture*; Social Explorer: *Explore: The Asian Population in the United States: A Diversity of Cultures*; Audio: *Cultural Diversity around the World: Why the Dead Need Money*; Journal Prompt: *JOURNAL: Cultural Diversity and Death*; Tabs—Accordion Photo Gallery: *Standards of Beauty*; Audio: *Cultural Diversity Around the World: You Are What You Eat? An Exploration in Cultural Relativity*; Journal Prompt: *Journal: Cultural Relativity*; End of Module Quiz: *Quiz 2.1: What Is Culture?*

Module 2.2: Video: *Thinking like a Sociologist: Culture*; Tabs—Accordion Photo Gallery: *Figure 2.1: Gestures to Indicate Height, Southern Mexico*; Audio: *Cultural Diversity in the United States: Miami—Continuing Controversy over Language*; Journal Prompt: *Journal: Shared Language*; Audio: *Cultural Diversity in the United States: Race and Language: Searching for Self Labels*; Journal Prompt: *Journal: Race and Language*; Document: *Read the Document: Horace Miner, Body Ritual Among the Nacirema*; End of Module Quiz: *Quiz 2.2 Components of Symbolic Culture*

Module 2.3: Catalog Widget Photo Gallery: *Looking at Subcultures*; End of Module Quiz: *Quiz 2.3: Many Cultural Worlds*

Module 2.4: *Survey*: *Culture*; End of Module Quiz: *Quiz 2.4: Values in U.S. Society*

Module 2.5: End of Module Quiz: *Quiz 2.5: Cultural Universals*

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Module 2.6: Audio: *Thinking Critically: Are We Prisoners of Our Genes?* End of Module Quiz: *Quiz 2.6 Sociobiology and Human behavior*

Module 2.7: Journal Prompt: *Journal: Technology*; Audio: *Sociology and New Technology: How Smart Is Your Clothing?*; End of Module Quiz: *Quiz 2.7 Technology in the Global Village*; *Shared Writing*: *Culture*; Advanced Flashcards: *Chapter 2 Key Terms*; End of Chapter Quiz: *Chapter 2 Quiz: Culture*

Chapter Overview

I. What Is Culture?

A. The concept of culture is sometimes easier to grasp by description than by definition. All human groups possess culture, which consists of language, beliefs, values, norms, and material objects that are passed from one generation to the next. Although the particulars of culture may differ from one group to another, culture itself is universal—all societies develop shared, learned ways of perceiving and participating in the world around them.

B. Culture can be subdivided into material culture and nonmaterial culture.
   1. Material culture—things such as jewelry, art, buildings, weapons, machines, clothing, hairstyles, and so on.
   2. Nonmaterial culture—a group's ways of thinking (beliefs, values, and assumptions) and common patterns of behavior (language, gestures, and other forms of interaction).

C. Culture provides a taken-for-granted orientation to life.
   1. We assume that our own culture is normal or natural; in fact, it is not natural, but rather is learned. It penetrates our lives so deeply that it is taken for granted and provides the lens through which we perceive and evaluate things.
   2. It provides implicit instructions that tell us what we ought to do and a moral imperative that defines what we think is right and wrong.
   3. Coming into contact with a radically different culture produces "culture shock," challenging our basic assumptions.
   4. A consequence of internalizing culture is ethnocentrism, using our own culture (and assuming it to be good, right, and superior) to judge other cultures. It is functional when it creates in-group solidarity, but can be dysfunctional if it leads to discrimination against those who are different.

D. Although all groups practice some forms of ethnocentrism, people can also employ cultural relativism, the practice of understanding a culture on its own terms without assessing its elements as any better or worse than one's own culture. Cultural relativism presents a challenge to ordinary thinking because we tend to use our own culture to judge others.
   1. Because we tend to use our own culture as the standard, cultural relativism presents a challenge to ordinary thinking.
   2. At the same time, this view helps us appreciate other ways of life.

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3. Robert Edgerton suggests developing a scale for evaluating cultures on their "quality of life." He argues that those cultural practices that result in exploitation *should* be judged as morally inferior to those that enhance people's lives.

II. Components of Symbolic Culture

A. Sociologists sometimes refer to nonmaterial culture as symbolic culture, because symbols are the central component of nonmaterial culture. Symbols include gestures, language, values, norms, sanctions, folkways, and mores.

B. Gestures, or using one's body to communicate with others, are shorthand means of communication.
   1. People in every culture use gestures, although the gestures and the meanings differ; confusion or offense can result because of misunderstandings over the meaning of a gesture or misuse of a gesture.
   2. There is disagreement over whether there are any universal gestures. They tend to vary considerably around the world.
   3. Because some gestures are so closely associated with emotional messages, the gestures themselves can often elicit emotions.

C. Language consists of a system of symbols that can be put together in an infinite number of ways in order to communicate abstract thought. Each word is a symbol to which a culture attaches a particular meaning. It is important because it is the primary means of communication between people.
   1. It allows human experiences to be cumulative; each generation builds on the body of significant experiences that is passed on to it by the previous generation, thus freeing people to move beyond immediate experiences.
   2. It allows for a social or shared past. We are able to discuss past events with others.
   3. It allows for a social or shared future. Language allows us to plan future activities with one another.
   4. It allows the exchange of perspectives (i.e., ideas about events and experiences).
   5. It allows people to engage in complex, shared, goal-directed behavior.
   6. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis states that our thinking and perception not only are expressed by language, but actually are also shaped by language because we are taught not only words but also a particular way of thinking and perceiving. Rather than objects and events forcing themselves onto our consciousness, our very language determines our consciousness.

D. Culture includes values, norms, and sanctions.
   1. Values are the standards by which people define good and bad, beautiful and ugly. Every group develops both values and expectations regarding the right way to reflect them.
   2. Norms are the expectations, or rules of behavior, that develop out of a group's values.
   3. Sanctions are the positive or negative reactions to the way in which people follow norms. Positive sanctions (a money reward, a prize, a smile, or even a handshake) are expressions of approval; negative sanctions (a fine, a frown, or harsh words) denote disapproval for breaking a norm.

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4. To relieve the pressure of having to strictly follow the norms, some cultures have moral holidays—specified times when people are allowed to break the norms and not worry about being sanctioned. Mardi Gras is an example of a moral holiday in our society.
5. Some societies have moral holiday places, locations where norms are expected to be broken. An example would be red light districts where prostitutes are allowed to work the street.

E. Norms vary in terms of their importance to a culture.
1. Folkways are norms that are not strictly enforced, such as passing on the left side of the sidewalk. They may result in a person getting a dirty look.
2. Mores are norms that are believed to be essential to core values and we insist on conformity. A person who steals, rapes, and kills has violated some of society's most important mores.
3. Norms that one group considers to be folkways may be viewed as mores by another group. A male walking down the street with the upper half of his body uncovered may be violating a folkway; a female doing the same thing may be violating mores.
4. Taboos are norms so strongly ingrained that even the thought of them is greeted with revulsion. Eating human flesh and having sex with one's parents are examples of such behavior.

III. Many Cultural Worlds: Subcultures and Countercultures

A. Subcultures are groups whose values and related behaviors are so distinct that they set their members off from the dominant culture.
1. Each subculture is a world within the larger world of the dominant culture, and has a distinctive way of looking at life, but remains compatible with the dominant culture.
2. The U.S. society contains tens of thousands of subcultures. Some are quite broad (teenagers), while others are narrow (body builders). Some ethnic groups form subcultures, as do certain occupational groups.

B. Countercultures are groups whose values set their members in opposition to the dominant culture.
1. While usually associated with negative behavior, some countercultures are not.
2. Countercultures are often perceived as a threat by the dominant culture because they challenge the culture's values; for this reason, the dominant culture will move against a particular counterculture in order to affirm its own core values. For example, the Mormons in the 1800s challenged the dominant culture's core value of monogamy.

IV. Values in U.S. Society

A. Because the United States is a pluralistic society made up of many different groups, competing value systems are common. Some sociologists, however, have tried to identify some underlying core values in the United States.
1. Sociologist Robin Williams identified ten core values: achievement and success (especially, doing better than others); individualism (success due to individual effort); activity and work; efficiency and practicality; science and technology

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(using science to control nature); freedom; democracy; equality (especially of opportunity); and racism and group superiority.

2. Henslin updated Williams' list by adding education; religiosity (belief in a Supreme Being and following some set of matching precepts); and romantic love.

B. Values are not independent units; value clusters are made up of related core values that come together to form a larger whole. In the value cluster surrounding success, for example, we find hard work, education, efficiency, material comfort, and individualism all bound together.

C. Some values conflict with each other. There cannot be full expressions of democracy, equality, racism, and sexism at the same time. These are value contradictions and as society changes some values are challenged and undergo modification.

D. A cluster that is emerging in response to fundamental changes in U.S. society is made up of the values of leisure, self-fulfillment, physical fitness, and youthfulness. Another emerging value is concern for the environment.

1. Valuing leisure is reflected in the huge recreation industry that exists today.
2. Self-fulfillment is expressed through the human potential movement and on the popularity of self-help books and talk shows.
3. While physical fitness is not a new value, it is emphasized more today, as evidenced by the interest in health foods, weight and diet, and the growth in the number of health club/physical fitness centers.
4. Today, there is a new sense of urgency in being young, perhaps because of the presence of aging baby boomers who are trying to deny their biological fate.
5. Our history suggests a lack of concern for the environment; it was generally viewed as a challenge to be overcome. However, today there is a genuine concern for protecting the environment.

E. Core values do not change without meeting strong resistance.

1. Change is seen as a threat to the established way of life, something that will undermine people's present and their future.
2. Today's clash in values is often so severe that the term "culture wars" has been coined to refer to it.

F. Values and their supporting beliefs may blind people to other social circumstances. Success stories blind many people in the United States to the dire consequences of family poverty, lack of education, and dead-end jobs.

G. Ideal culture refers to the ideal values and norms of a people. What people actually do usually falls short of this ideal, and sociologists refer to the norms and values that people actually follow as real culture.

V. Cultural Universals

A. Although there are universal human activities, there is no universally accepted way of doing any of them.

1. Anthropologist George Murdock concluded that all human groups have certain cultural universals: customs about courtship, cooking, marriage, funerals, games, laws, music, myths, incest taboos, and toilet training are present in all cultures.
2. Even so, the specific customs differ from one group to another. For example, there is no universal form of the family, no universal way of disposing of the

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dead, and no universal method of toilet training from one culture to another. Even incest is defined differently from group to group.

B. Sociobiologists argue that, as a result of natural selection, the basic cause of human behavior is biology.
   1. Just as physical characteristics and instinctual behavior of animals is the result of natural selection (i.e., those genetic traits that aid in survival tend to become common to a species while those that do not tend to disappear), so is human behavior.
   2. Edward Wilson has argued that religion, competition and cooperation, slavery and genocide, war and peace, and envy and altruism can all be explained in terms of genetic programming.
   3. Most sociologists reject this claim. Unlike other species, humans are capable of reasoning and abstract thought; they can consider alternatives, reflect on outcomes, and make choices.

VI. Technology in the Global Village

A. Central to a group's material culture is its technology. In its simplest sense, technology can be equated with tools. In its broadest sense, technology also includes the skills or procedures necessary to make and use those tools.
   1. The emerging technologies of an era that make a major impact on human life are referred to as new technologies. The printing press and the computer are both examples of new technologies.
   2. The sociological significance of technology is that it sets the framework for the nonmaterial culture, influencing the way people think and how they relate to one another.

B. Not all parts of culture change at the same pace; cultural lag was William Ogburn's term for situations where the material culture changes first and the nonmaterial culture lags behind.

C. Although for most of human history, cultures have had little contact with one another, there has always been some contact with other groups, resulting in groups learning from one another.
   1. This transmission of cultural characteristics is cultural diffusion; it is more likely to produce changes in material culture than the nonmaterial culture.
   2. Cultural diffusion occurs more rapidly today, given the technology.
   3. Travel and communication unite the world to such an extent that there is almost no "other side of the world." For example, Japan, no longer a purely Eastern culture, has adapted Western economic production, forms of dress, music, and so on. This leads to cultural leveling where cultures become similar to one another.

Special Features

- Cultural Diversity around the World: Why the Dead Need Money
- Cultural Diversity around the World: You Are What You Eat? An Exploration in Cultural Relativity
- Cultural Diversity in the United States: Miami—Continuing Controversy over Language
- Cultural Diversity in the United States: Race and Language: Searching for Self-Labels

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- Thinking Critically: Are We Prisoners of Our Genes?
- Sociology and the New Technology: How Smart Is Your Clothing?

Lecture Suggestions

- Ask your students to provide specific examples of how the material culture in China, Iran, and Ethiopia may differ from the material culture in the United States. Where do they obtain the information they have about the material culture in China, Iran, and Ethiopia? Then ask them how much confidence they have in their sources of information, and why. In considering this last point, have your students think about and discuss the ways a "source" country's *own* material and nonmaterial culture might consciously and/or unconsciously distort the information it provides about another country's culture.

- Examining the concept of ethnocentrism, ask your students to list some of the groups to which they currently belong. Then have them identify the ethnocentric tendencies of these groups, and discuss in what ways these ethnocentric tendencies may be functional and/or dysfunctional to the group as a whole and its members in particular.

- Send students on a scavenger hunt throughout campus to search for elements of culture. When they return have them connect what they found with the material from the chapter. They can then synthesize this information into a general statement about the culture of their campus. Have students share and compare their discoveries.

- Considering the concept of cultural shock, ask your students to share an instant or instances when their cultural assumptions were challenged by an encounter with a significantly different culture. In which ways did the cultural shock force them to reevaluate or change their own ways of thinking? Did the effects of the cultural shock lead to any long-lasting and/or profound changes in their own cultural attitudes and, if so, do they now view those changes as a positive or negative experience?

- Have students list the norms, folkways, and mores from American society. Then discuss the importance of these in American culture. Do any of them seem silly and/or irrelevant? If their parents/grandparents were to make this list would it look the same/different? What do these differences imply about the social changes that have taken place in our society? Has cultural leveling influenced any of these changes?

Suggested Assignments

- Ask your students to log on to the Internet and connect to three major newspapers available online from countries other than the United States. Have them spend at least 15 minutes per paper examining as many features, stories, and advertisements as they can. From their examination, ask them if they can deduce any core values of the countries that publish the newspapers. Furthermore, ask them to consider how those core values may or may not differ from some of the "American" core values identified by Robin Williams and James Henslin. Then have your students report their findings to the class while discussing to what extent newspapers, as examples of material culture, may or may not be indicative of their producing society's nonmaterial culture.

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- Require each student to attend a cultural activity of a different ethnic or racial group apart from their own and write a short paper on their impression of the experience.

- Suggest that students take a trip to the inner city and record all the observations of material and nonmaterial culture they can observe. For safety reasons, suggest they make the trip with at least one other student and do so during the daylight hours.

- Have students participate in or lead a multicultural event. They could prepare different foods, generate lists of diverse music, provide examples of artwork from many cultures, and so on.

Journal Prompts/Shared Writing

J_2.1 Journal Prompt: Cultural Diversity and Death
How do the traditional Chinese customs regarding the dead differ from your culture's customs? Why do these customs seem strange to Americans and so ordinary to traditional Chinese? How has your culture shaped your ideas about death and the relationship of the dead and the living?

J_2.2 Journal Prompt: Cultural Relativity
If you were reared in U.S. society, more than likely you think that eating frog legs is okay; eating ants or flies is disgusting; and eating cod sperm, maggot cheese, dogs, cats, and monkey brains is downright repugnant. How would you apply the concepts of ethnocentrism and cultural relativism to your perceptions of these customs?

J_2.3 Journal Prompt: Shared Language
Do you think that Miami points to the future of the United States? Like the grandchildren of the European immigrants who lost the ability to speak their grandparent's native language, when do you think the grandchildren of Mexican and South American immigrants will be unable to speak Spanish?

J_2.4 Journal Prompt: Race and Language
What terms do you use to refer to your race–ethnicity? What "bad" terms do you know that others have used to refer to your race–ethnicity? What is the difference in meaning between the terms you use and the "bad" terms? Where does that meaning come from?

J_2.5 Journal Prompt: Technology
How do you think developments in computing will change *your* life ten years from now? How do you think society will be different ten years from now because of developments in computing?

SW_2.1 Shared Writing: Culture
What subculture are you a member of? Why do you think that your group is a subculture and not a counterculture? What is your group's relationship to the mainstream culture?

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Annotated Suggested Films/TV Shows

Cross-cultural Communication: How Culture Affects Communication. Odyssey Productions. 2005, 20 minutes (Video).

This program examines issues in cross-cultural communication. It discusses public behavior and taboos, power, stereotyping and prejudice, miscommunication, time conceptualization, socialization, direct and indirect communication, and high-context versus low-context cultures. The program features vignettes and offers practical applications for cross-cultural communication.

Modern Family. ABC. 2009 (Series).

This American comedy series portrays the fictional characters of Jay Pritchett, his second wife, their infant son and his stepson, and his two children and their families.

For additional video resources, please click this link to visit a full list of our Core Concept Video Series: http://media.pearsoncmg.com/ph/hss/SSA_CCND_RESOURCES_1/mmnd_winter_2013/hss/sociology/core_concept_video_series/index.php

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