Window on Humanity - A Concise Introduction to General Anthropology 9th edition Kottak Solutions Manual

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CHAPTER 2
CULTURE

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

1. Describe the defining dimensions of culture.
2. Discuss the evolutionary basis of culture and the similarities and differences between humans and primates.
3. Define and identify examples of cultural universalities, generalities, and particularities.
4. Explain how people may avoid, subvert, and manipulate cultural "rules" and expectations, and how today's anthropologists view and analyze those practices.
5. Recall the three levels of culture and why it is important to differentiate among them.
6. Distinguish between ethnocentrism and cultural relativism, including how both relate to human rights.
7. Describe the mechanisms of cultural change.
8. Summarize how globalization affects culture, including how people may affect and be affected by the interrelated forces of globalization.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

I WHAT IS CULTURE?

A. Sir Edward Tylor defined *culture* as, "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, arts, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."

B. **Enculturation** is the process by which a child learns his or her culture.

C. Culture Is Learned

1. Cultural learning is unique to humans.
2. Cultural learning is the accumulation of knowledge about experiences and information not perceived directly by the organism but transmitted to it through symbols.
   a. **Symbols** are signs that have no necessary or natural connection with the things they signify or for which they stand.
   b. Anthropologist Clifford Geertz described cultures as "plans, recipes, rules, instructions" that guide human behavior.
3. Culture is learned through direct instruction and observation, providing conscious and unconscious means for the acquisition of cultural knowledge.
4. Anthropologists agree that all human populations share the same capacity for culture.

D. Culture Is Symbolic

1. The human ability to use symbols is the basis of culture.

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2. A *symbol* is defined as something verbal or nonverbal within a particular language or culture that comes to stand for something else.
    a. In addition to language, there is a rich array of nonverbal symbols. Flags are one example.
3. Other primates have demonstrated a rudimentary ability to use symbols, but only humans have elaborated cultural abilities such as to learn, to communicate, to store, to process, and to use symbols.

E. Culture Is Shared

1. Culture is an attribute not of individuals per se but of individuals as members of groups.
2. The social transmission of culture tends to unify people by providing them with common experiences.
3. Such experiences in turn shape people's values, memories, and expectations.

F. Culture and Nature

1. Cultural habits, perceptions, and inventions mold human nature in many directions.
2. Our culture and cultural changes affect the ways in which we perceive nature, human nature, and the natural world.

G. Culture Is All-Encompassing and Integrated

1. The anthropological concept of culture includes all aspects of human social life, including features that in other respects may be considered trivial or unworthy of serious study.
2. **Popular culture** includes aspects of culture that have meaning for many or most people within the same national culture.
3. A culture is an integrated, patterned system: Changes in one dimension of culture will likely generate changes in other dimensions.
4. **Core values** are sets of ideas, attitudes, symbols, and judgments that further integrate a particular culture and distinguish it from others.

H Culture Is Instrumental, Adaptive, and Maladaptive

1. Like other animals, humans adapt biologically; but culture is the main instrument of human adaptability and success.
2. People use culture to fulfill their needs.
    a. These include basic biological needs for food, drink, shelter, comfort, and reproduction.
    b. They also include psychological and emotional needs for such things as friendship, companionship, and approval.
3. Sometimes adaptive behavior that offers short-term benefits to particular individuals may harm the environment and threaten a group's long-term survival, thus making certain cultural traits, patterns, and inventions ultimately maladaptive.

II. CULTURE'S EVOLUTIONARY BASIS

A. The human capacity for culture has an evolutionary basis that extends back at perhaps 3 million years.

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1. Similarities between humans and apes are apparent in anatomy, brain structure, genetics, and biochemistry.
2. We are most closely related to chimpanzees and gorillas.
   a. **Hominids**: chimps and gorillas
   b. **Hominins**: a group that leads to humans but *not* to chimps and gorillas
3. Many human traits reflect the fact that our ancestors lived in trees:
   a. Grasping ability and manual dexterity (especially opposable thumbs)
   b. Depth and color vision
   c. Learning ability based on a large, visually oriented brain
   d. Substantial parental investment in a limited number of offspring
4. Manual dexterity and depth perception are essential in manipulating objects and in the human ability to make tools.

B. What We Share With Other Primates

1. Learning: the ability to learn from experience and adapt behavior and social patterns when faced with environmental changes
2. Tool use (stones, "termiting")
3. The ability to aim and throw objects
4. Hunting: Other primates, especially chimpanzees, are avid hunters.

C. How We Differ From Other Primates

1. Cooperation and sharing are much more characteristic of humans.
2. Human females lack a visible **estrus** cycle and have concealed ovulation, leading to more durable pair bonds, or marriage.
3. Marriage leads to exogamy, kinship groups, and lifelong ties with children.

III. UNIVERSALITY, GENERALITY, AND PARTICULARITY

A. Anthropologists distinguish among the universal, the generalized, and the particular in studying human diversity.
   1. Cultural **universals** are certain biological, psychological, social, and cultural features that are found in every culture.
   2. Cultural **generalities** include features that are common to several but not all human groups.
   3. Cultural **particularities** are features that are unique to certain cultural traditions.

B. Universals and Generalities

1. Biologically based universals include a long period of infant dependency, year-round sexuality, and a complex brain that enables us to use symbols, languages, and tools.
2. Social universals include life in groups and families of some kind.
3. Generalities occur in certain times and places but not in all cultures.
   a. The nuclear family is one cultural generality that is present in many but not all societies.
   b. Cultural generalities may arise through **diffusion** (cultural borrowing), inheritance from a common cultural ancestor, or through domination, such as when a more powerful nation imposes its customs and procedures on another group.

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C. Particularity: Patterns of Culture

1. Practices that are unique to a single place, culture, or society are *cultural particularities*.
2. Cultures are integrated and patterned differently and display tremendous variation and diversity.

IV. CULTURE AND THE INDIVIDUAL

A. Individual human beings make up the *system*—meaning culture, society, social relations, or social structure—but are also constrained by its rules and the actions of others.

1. While cultural rules provide guidance, people use their culture actively and creatively; they have the ability to avoid, manipulate, subvert, and change the rules and patterns of their own cultures.
2. Culture is contested, and supposedly common symbols may have radically different meanings to different individuals and groups in the same culture.
3. Some anthropologists find it useful to distinguish between *ideal* culture, or the normative descriptions of a culture given by its people, and *real* culture, or behavior as observed by an anthropologist.
4. Culture may be described as having interrelated public and individual dimensions.
5. Contemporary anthropologists tend to view culture as a process in action, practice, and resistance, rather than as an entity transmitted across generations.
   a. *Agency* is the actions individuals take, both alone and in groups, in forming and transforming cultural identities.
6. *Practice theory* is an approach to culture that focuses on how varied individuals, through their ordinary and extraordinary actions and practices, manage to influence, create, and transform the world in which they live.

V. LEVELS OF CULTURE

1. **National culture** refers to the experiences, beliefs, learned behavior patterns, values, and institutions shared by citizens of the same nation.
2. **International culture** refers to cultural practices that extend beyond and across national boundaries.
3. **Subcultures** are identifiable cultural patterns and traditions associated with particular groups in the same complex society.

VI ETHNOCENTRISM, CULTURAL RELATIVISM, AND HUMAN RIGHTS

1. **Ethnocentrism** is the tendency to view one's own culture as superior and to apply one's own values in judging the behavior and beliefs of people raised in other cultures.
   a. What may seem alien to us might appear normal, proper, and prized elsewhere.
   b. The fact of cultural diversity calls ethnocentrism into question.

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2. The concept of **cultural relativism** asserts that behavior in one culture should not be judged by the standards of another culture.
    a. What happens when cultural practices, values, and rights come into conflict with human rights?
    b. Some cultures in the Middle East and Africa have customs requiring female genital modification (FGM). Clitoridectomy and infibulation are two such practices.
    c. These procedures are traditional where practiced but are opposed by human rights advocates for infringing on the basic human right to control one's body and sexuality. (Does circumcision of infants in the United States, and other male genital operations, fall into a similar category?)
3. Cultural relativism is not a moral position in anthropology but a methodological one; in order to understand a culture, we must try to understand how people in that culture see things.
4. The concept of **human rights** invokes the realm of justice and morality superior to countries, cultures, and religions; rights that are vested in the individual.
5. **Cultural rights** are vested not in individuals but in groups and include a group's ability to preserve its cultural traditions.
    a. Indigenous **intellectual property rights (IPR)** allow indigenous groups to control who may know and use their collective knowledge and its applications.
6. An understanding of cultural relativism and cultural rights does not preclude an anthropologist from making a judgment based on what he or she refers to as international standards of justice and morality.

VII. MECHANISMS OF CULTURAL CHANGE

A. *Diffusion*, defined as the spread of cultural traits through borrowing between cultures, has been a source of cultural change throughout human history.
    1. Diffusion can be *direct*, when two cultures trade, intermarry, or wage war on one another.
    2. Diffusion can be *forced* when one culture subjugates another and imposes its customs on the dominated group, as through warfare or colonization.
    3. Diffusion is *indirect* when cultural practices or traits move from group A to group C via group B without any firsthand contact between groups A and C.

B. **Acculturation** is the exchange of cultural features that results when groups come into continuous firsthand contact.
    1. Pidgin is an example of acculturation, because it is a language form that develops by blending elements from different languages in order to facilitate communication between the populations in contact, such as in trade relationships.

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C. **Independent invention** is the process by which humans innovate, creatively finding solutions to problems.
   1. Cultural generalities are partly explained by the independent invention of similar responses to similar cultural and environmental circumstances.
   2. The independent invention of agriculture in the Middle East and Mexico is one example.

VIII. GLOBALIZATION

A. **Globalization** encompasses a series of processes that work transnationally to promote change in a world in which nations and people are increasingly interlinked and mutually dependent.
   1. The forces of globalization include international commerce and finance, travel and tourism, transnational migration, and the media.

B. The primary meaning of globalization—and the meaning on which this book focuses—is worldwide connectedness and linkages.
   1. A second, political meaning has to do with efforts to create a global free market for goods and services.

C. The media—the Internet in particular—play a key role in globalization.
   1. Media spread information about products, events, lifestyles, and perceived benefits of globalization.
   2. People increasingly live their lives across borders, maintaining connections with more than one nation-state.
   3. Money, resources, and information are transmitted rapidly across vast distances.

D. The effects of globalization are broad and often unwelcome, representing threats to locals' autonomy, identity, and livelihood.
   1. Sovereign nations resist. Brexit is one example.

Feature:

Anthropology Today—Preserving Cultural Heritage

1. *Heritage* is something that has been passed on from previous generations. *Cultural heritage* is the culture, values, and traditions of a particular group, both tangible and intangible.
2. Heritage becomes a matter of international concern when one group seizes it from another or destroys it.
   a. As in the case of the Parthenon Sculptures known as the Elgin Marbles, heritage items often have been collected, purchased, or stolen for museums and private collections.
   b. UNESCO recognizes some sites—whether natural resources or cultural heritage sites—as having "World Heritage" value; but many of these are endangered by war and instability.
3. Activists, historians, anthropologists, and others have contributed to efforts to ensure indigenous groups maintain or recover items of cultural heritage; and several protective measures have been enacted by the UN:

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a. 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict
b. 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage
c. 2007 Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

4. Different groups may find significance in cultural heritage sites, artifacts, and remains for different reasons—for their scientific importance but also as sources of identity, as commodities, or as threats to be destroyed.

LECTURE TOPICS

1. Discuss the social history of early definitions of culture and address how anthropological notions of culture are both similar and different from these.

2. Discuss the deep tenacity of particular social values, illustrating this effect by citing cases in which people have gone to great sacrifices to maintain the value systems of their cultures.

3. Describe the process of enculturation to a subculture with which you are familiar, such as the academic professional subculture.

4. Using one particular cultural practice (e.g., clitoridectomy), discuss the implications of a culturally relativist position. Clarify the difference between moral relativism and cultural relativism, addressing how cultural relativism presents an analytic stance through which to consider the significance of particular cultural practices for the people who experience them.

5. Discuss how cultures have never been completely isolated, bounded geographically, but rather have been characterized by the movement of people, technologies, and goods across social relations and networks.

6. Analyze the different contemporary uses of the term *globalization* among anthropologists and in social discourse. If we agree that such a process exists, is this a new phenomenon? What are the different positions one might take on the manifestations and effects of globalization? Question the students on what they think constitutes globalization and whether they view such processes as largely positive or negative. How is even the discussion of globalization (as in current concerns over global terrorism) a social force with which people must contend in their daily lives?

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