

**SociologicalYOU Chapter 3 PPT Audio Lecture Transcript**

**SociologicalYOU** by Angela Thompson and Keith Whitworth.

This is Next-Gen Introductory Sociology.

Welcome to Chapter 3: Culture — Defined by everyday reality

There are five modules in this chapter.

Module 1: Analyzing Culture

Module 2: Structural Elements of Culture

Module 3: The Development of Social Problems within Cultures Module 4: Applying the Sociological Imagination: Experiencing Culture Module 5: Culture and Change

Please note, this PowerPoint does not cover every key term in Chapter 3. Please read your textbook to see what is not covered in the PowerPoint. As we review the contents of this PowerPoint, I would encourage you to keep the following points to ponder in mind:

First, what are the four types of culture and four basic elements of culture?

Next, why is understanding culture important to everyday life?

Finally, how and why is culture changing around the world?

These points should help you think critically about the role of culture in your life, in society and the larger world.

**Module 1: The Sociological Perspective**

There are a variety of different types of culture worth analyzing. Let's consider some of the important key terms associated with this topic.

First, culture itself is defined as the socially learned and shared ideas, behaviors and material components of society. The two different types of culture are

material/non-material culture and ideal/real culture.

Material culture consists of the physical artifacts that represent components of society. An iphone and a backpack are examples of material culture.

On the other hand non-material culture consists of ideas and symbols that represent components of society. Non-material culture could include the idea to consume fewer purchased products and lead a more sustainable lifestyle.

That leads us to ideal culture. Ideal culture is defined as the ideals and values that a society professes to believe. For example, the ideal corporate culture is one that is characterized by a sense of community, integrity and a strong work ethic by employees.

In comparison, real culture is the actual behavior of members of society. Using the same corporate culture example, we find that within some corporations real culture is characterized by individualism, dishonesty and getting by with the least amount of work.

That brings us to culture shock, which is surprise, disorientation or fear when encountering a new culture. When a person travels and encounters something they are not used to, they may experience surprise, disorientation or even fear. In that instance, they are experiencing culture shock.

# Module 2: Social Structures

Module 2 gives us an opportunity to consider some structural elements of culture, namely those associated with symbols and language. For our purposes, symbols are defined as an idea or object that has a shared meaning to groups of people.

Symbols developed shared meanings within groups and form patterns resulting in the production of culture. Language is made up of symbols. Specifically, language is defined as words and symbols used to communicate. Language can take many forms.

For example, there is verbal language. Verbal language is a pattern of spoken and written words. Verbal language is integral to the formation of social identity and group membership and emphasizes diversity in society.

On the other hand, non-verbal language is a system of communication using symbols such as facial expressions, gestures and proximity of the body. It's important to understand that non-verbal language is not limited to gestures and facial expressions. New forms of non-verbal language include the use of social networking to communicate through the use of photos within Instagram and symbols such as twitter's hashtag.

Both verbal and non-verbal languages are integral components of every culture and help form social structures within society.

An example of symbols used to communicate includes emoticons -- specifically, emoticons are a symbol that is a type of shorthand. They are a means of expressing emotions and attitudes within text-based communications.

Let's take a moment to consider a theory. The Sapir-Whorf Theory is a theoretical perspective that suggests that people view society through the framework of language. The Sapir-Whorf Theory contends that language influences how we view the world around us.

For example, language pertaining to time uses metaphors related to money. Language related to the concept of arguing often uses war metaphors.

This consistent use of metaphorical language develops cultural patterns that form social structures.

Personal space is another important but often overlooked aspect of culture. Personal space is defined as the physical region surrounding an individual that is considered private.

As noted with Figure 3.2.1, the amount of space people feel comfortable with varies depending on the region of the world.

Take a moment to consider one of our points to ponder. Why is understanding this aspect of culture important in everyday life?

There are additional structural elements of culture worth addressing. These include beliefs and values.

Beliefs are ideas generally held to be true within society. Examples include religious and political beliefs.

Values are collective ideas about what is desirable and undesirable in society. Achievement and success are examples of desirable values.

Values are derived from beliefs and are deeply embedded in society, which is why social structures do not normally change rapidly.

For example, a new belief is emerging regarding the need to take better care of planet earth so that future generations will have the same or better quality of life as we do now. This belief pertaining to sustainable development is associated with the values of personal sacrifice and conservation. As values change, the social structures are altered.

Take a moment to consider this list of basic American values developed by Robin M Williams, Jr. This list illustrates the point that values our collective ideas about what is desirable and undesirable in society. There are several other important structural elements of culture to consider.

First, there are norms. Norms are defined as established guidelines and expectations of behavior. Norms are integral to maintaining culture and social structures. Norms are made up of folkways, mores, laws and taboos.Let's consider each one of these in turn.

Folkways are informal and common norms that guide everyday behavior. Folkways are norms that guide us through our everyday behaviors, such as what to wear, how to greet others and the appropriate manners at the dinner table.

Mores are informal norms based upon moral and ethical factors. Mores are norms related to moral and ethical issues such as fidelity within a relationship. The penalties associated with mores are much harsher than folkways.

Laws are formal and legal rules enforced by the state. Both informal and formal methods are used to enforce this type of norm.

Taboos are norms that have violated cause revulsion and the most severe social sanctions. Taboos pertain to norms that deal with reprehensible behaviors, such as rape and incest.

When considering the norms of a culture, one must also consider how these norms are shared within the culture.

Known as cultural transmission, it is defined as the means by which culture is passed from generation to generation.

Traditional means of cultural transmission included the tribal oral storyteller. The role of the storyteller disappeared during the transition to agricultural societies.

It can be argued that television has replaced the storyteller as the primary means of transmitting culture. Standardized messages, such as those communicated via television, influence language, beliefs, values and norms.

The means of cultural transmission provides constant and consistent reinforcement of the cultural elements within a society, thus reinforcing the structures of society.

Finally, sanctions are a social reaction to norms. More specifically, they are a punishment or reward that supports socially approved norms.

Table 3.2.1 highlights some examples of behaviors. In this case infractions and sanctions that are applied in various parts of the world. When reviewing the list, consider how and why sanctions are different around the world.

# Module 3: Social Problems

In Module 3, we consider subcultures and countercultures. Subcultures are defined as a distinct set of cultural characteristics that are shared by a minority of people in the society.

A subculture is made up of a group of people with common cultural characteristics. For example, subcultures discussed in the chapter include bikers, knitters, fans of jazz music and the Amish.

Subcultures can exist within subcultures, as is the case with members of the Amish community who use cell phones. The goal of a subculture is not to change the society, but to have the freedom to live their culture without interference by the larger society.

In comparison, counter cultures are defined as groups that are in opposition or contrast with the majority of the members of society.

Counter cultures are groups whose behaviors are in opposition to the larger society and whose goal is to change the society in some way. Sometimes counterculture group members engage in behavior that is seen as taboo, in society.

Hate groups, the LGBTQIA community, and protesters in the umbrella movement in Hong Kong are all examples of counter cultures because they want to change society in some significant way.

# Module 4: Sociological Imagination

# Module 4 gives us an opportunity to apply the sociological imagination to our experience of culture. Let's begin with cultural universals and social facts.

Cultural universals are aspects of culture that are found in all societies. Examples include shelter, beliefs and language, just to name a few.

Cultural universals are reinforced by what Durkheim called social facts. Social facts are social patterns that are external to individuals and greatly influence our way of thinking and behaving in the society. Social facts are those aspects of culture that are external to us but influence our thoughts and behaviors.

The sociological imagination can be used as a tool to help us view cultural universals and social facts, from the standpoint of both the individual and the larger society.

Next consider the notion of ethnocentrism. This involves judging another culture by one's own standard. Ethnocentrism is when one culture's standard is used to judge that of another. People often view their own culture in a positive light and another person's culture in a negative light.

Take a moment and look closely at the images on the screen.

These are food items in certain cultures. How do you judge the images on the screen? Why is your reaction to them important?

By analyzing food practices around the world, we have an opportunity to consider

why we think the way we do about other people's food choices in specific and culture in general.

An alternative way to react to aspects of culture that are radically different from your own is with cultural relativism.

Cultural relativism involves understanding another culture from their standards. Cultural relativism occurs when we judge another culture based on the standards of their culture instead of our own. Examples include considering meat consumption from the standpoint of affordability, availability and storage in various parts of the world.

Cultural relativism affords us the opportunity to go beyond our own perspective to see and better understand why people make the choices they make in their own societies and why understanding culture is important in everyday life.

# Module 5: Social Change

Finally, Module 5 gives us insights into what promotes change within a society. Specifically, let's consider cultural diffusion, cultural lag and cultural leveling.

Beginning with cultural diffusion, cultural diffusion is the spread of norms, values, knowledge, symbols and material components from one society to another. Cultural diffusion involves the spread of culture from one society to another and can include items like food.

On the other hand, cultural lag is defined as the process by which technological development and progress outpace current norms, values, knowledge, symbols and material components of society. Cultural lag highlights the fact that non-material culture, such as laws, change at a slower pace than material culture, as in the case of Pinterest and sexting that are discussed in your textbook.

Lastly, cultural leveling is the process of cultures becoming similar as a result of factors such as media and globalization. Cultural leveling occurs when cultures become similar as a result of media and globalization and has occurred in a wide range of areas including, for example, the spread of the soft drink Coca-Cola.

It's worth noting that frequently technology is the catalyst for cultural change. Public policy and laws need to be routinely addressed so that they keep pace with the rapid changes in technology and social mores.

There are two final catalysts of change worth mentioning. They are: popular culture and high culture. Popular culture consists of cultural characteristics adopted, imitated and idolized by the masses. More specifically, popular culture consists of those things consumed by the middle and working class that come and go based on the whims of the masses.

By comparison, high culture consists of cultural characteristics associated with the dominant and elite members of society. High culture is made up of products, goods and services that are rare and only the wealthy can afford. Your book uses Monster High dolls and Picasso paintings to illustrate popular culture and high culture, respectively.

One more important point: people that can afford high culture can also afford popular culture but not vice versa.

This concludes the PowerPoint for Chapter 3 by **SociologicalYOU**, where we strive to “Connect Sociology and YOU!”

Length: 21:49