



Chapter 3 Expanded Key Terms

Beliefs: ideas generally held to be true within society. (LO 3.2.2)

One of the best examples of beliefs is concerning religion. Every society has one or more religions that provide a belief system within the culture. These ideas often relate to a belief in a god or gods and impact nearly every aspect of the culture. Wars are fought over the protection of these beliefs as they are entrenched in the minds of the members of society and are not easily changed.

Countercultures: subculture groups that are in opposition or contrast with the majority of the members of society. (LO 3.3.3)

Counterculture groups are a category of a subculture that is made up of people whose beliefs and actions are different from the dominant beliefs and actions in society. Counterculture groups are interested in changing society in some significant manner. The dominant culture is generally opposed to the social changes the counterculture group is trying to make.

Cultural Appropriation: when members of one cultural group borrow elements from another group's culture. (LO 3.x.x)

A prime example of cultural appropriation is when sports teams use the images and likenesses of Native Americans for their mascots, logos, and team symbols. These images are disrespectful and exploitative stereotypes done without the permission of Native Americans.

Cultural Diffusion: the spread of norms, values, knowledge, symbols, and material components from one society to another. (LO 3.5.1)

Cultural diffusion involves spreading physical culture, ideas, and practices from one society to another. The speed at which cultural diffusion occurs is influenced by an interaction between cultures, whether in person or via technology. Examples of cultural diffusion include social, economic, religious, and political culture.

Cultural Imperialism: the influence and power of one country's culture on a country due to importing goods and services. (LO 3.2.3)

Cultural imperialism occurs when one culture is promoted over another culture. This promotion is possible because the new culture has more societal power and influence. Examples of cultural imperialism occur when one culture dominates another during times of war, and the economic superiority of one country overpowers a weaker one. Cultural imperialism can occur regarding a country's economy, language, beliefs, laws, and government structures.

Cultural Lag: the process by which technological development and progress outpace current norms, values, knowledge, symbols, and material components of society. (LO 3.5.1)

Cultural lag occurs when the material aspects of culture change and the nonmaterial aspects take longer to catch up. Examples of cultural lag can be seen by looking at the rapid changes in technology and the fact that laws are not in place to address those changes.

Cultural Leveling: the process of cultures becoming similar due to factors such as media and globalization. (LO 3.5.1)

Cultural leveling occurs when cultures previously different from one another become similar due to contact. Forces such as globalization, technology, and travel all play a role in cultures becoming similar.

Cultural Relativism: understanding another culture from their standards. (LO 3.4.3)

Culture is relative and depends on time, place, and society. Consequently, cultural relativism contends that the actions of people in a society can only be understood in the context of their culture. Cultural relativism involves putting yourself in the other person's shoes and considering whether or not their actions and behaviors are appropriate for people based on their culture.

Cultural Transmission: means by which culture is passed from generation to generation. (LO 3.2.3)

Culture is learned, shared, and transmitted from one generation to the next. Consider how American values tend to be uniform and stable over time. Your parents probably taught you the same values they were taught. You will pass along those values to your children.

Cultural Universals: aspects of culture that are found in all societies. (LO 3.4.1)

Cultural universals are traits that are present in all societies around the world. Cultural universals can include norms, beliefs, values, or practices. For example, body adornment is a culturally universal practice. Body adornment can be found in societies worldwide, whether in tattoos, piercings, scarification, or dyeing.

Culture: a society's socially learned and shared ideas, behaviors, and material components. (LO 3.1.1)

Culture is a complex concept, as demonstrated by requiring an entire chapter to explain and discuss. There are four types of culture – material, nonmaterial, real, and ideal. There are four elements to culture – language, beliefs, values, and norms. When you travel, you experience new cultures that often have unique examples of the types and elements of culture. For example, Japan's material and nonmaterial cultures vary significantly from American culture. Culture is slow to change except in circumstances of war or sudden social upheaval.

Culture Shock: surprise, disorientation, or fear when encountering a new culture. (LO 3.1.1)

If you have traveled to a foreign country, you may have experienced culture shock. Food often differs from what you usually eat, and you may be reluctant to

try the local dishes. Customs can be different, such as taking off your shoes before entering a home or shrine or the requirement of females to be covered with a headscarf in some Muslim countries. After spending a year or more in a different country and returning to your home country, you may experience reverse culture shock. You may have to readjust to some of the cultural norms and prefer some of the norms of the country you visited on your own.

Dominant Ideology: beliefs and interests of the majority. (LO 3.3.1)

The dominant ideology is about who controls society and is typically based on what the majority of society thinks is good or bad, right or wrong, desirable or undesirable. The more powerful a group is in society, the more likely their beliefs and interests will become the dominant ideology within society. A group in society can be powerful and thus control the dominant ideology due to outnumbering other groups or having more significant influence than other groups.

Emoticons: a symbol that is a type of shorthand, which is a means of expressing emotions and attitudes within text-based communications. (LO 3.2.1)

New technologies such as email and texting have created a medium for the creation and use of emoticons. The symbols are icons that express emotion. An example is the wide range of variations of the smiley face, such as 😊 😄 😁. Emoticons are used as a means of communicating emotions in a text-based environment. Emoticons are an example of nonverbal language representing culturally universal symbols such as the smiley face.

Ethnocentrism: judging another culture by one's own standards. (LO 3.4.2)

Ethnocentrism involves using your own standards, norms, and values to judge the behavior of those from other cultures. Ethnocentrism consists of the assumption of superiority and the notion that your culture is the only correct and proper standard by which the rest of the world should be judged.

First-generation College Student:

the first person in the immediate family to attend college.
(LO 3.1.1)

College students whose parents did not attend college are considered first-generation students. Parents who have attended college can pass on information and guide their children as they enter college. Students whose parents did not attend college are less likely to know about such things as study skills or the importance of meeting with professors. As a result, they can be academically disadvantaged. Culture shock can be experienced as some students need to be adequately prepared for college life.

Folkways: informal and common norms that guide everyday behavior.
(LO 3.2.3)

Holding a door open for someone behind you and saying “bless you” when someone sneezes are examples of folkways. Failing to keep the door open or saying “bless you” is not considered offensive but deemed impolite. Folkways are not rigid and can be flexible. Failing to maintain these norms can sometimes be viewed as rude, as in the case of not saying “excuse me” when jostling someone in a crowded setting. The maintenance of these norms allows society to function smoothly and orderly.

High Culture: consists of cultural characteristics associated with the dominant and elite members of society. (LO 3.5.2)

High culture is made up of the goods, products, and services patronized by the upper-class members of society. Aspects of high culture are out of reach for the average citizen in society.

Ideal Culture: the ideals and values that a society professes to believe.
(LO 3.1.1)

An example of ideal culture is that American education is highly valued, especially higher education. Education is deemed important, and every member of society should have the opportunity to attend college. Approximately one-third of high school graduates will earn a college or university degree. Ideally, education should be available to everyone, but this differs from reality. In the

U.S., healthcare is highly valued, but the U.S. is the only industrialized country that does not provide universal healthcare coverage. The ideal culture regarding health care is different from the reality of millions of uninsured Americans.

Language: words and symbols that are society's primary vehicle for meaning and communication. (LO 3.2.1)

The two types of language are verbal and nonverbal. Language is one of the keys to understanding culture. One method of understanding culture is by examining how individuals and groups communicate. The patterns of communication provide structure within society. Censoring language on television maintains civility and protects children from inappropriate content. This censorship is a structural component within American society and helps maintain stability and healthy environments for children.

Laws: formal and legal rules enforced by the state. (LO 3.2.3)

Laws are designed to encourage group conformity and maintain social stability. Violation of laws can result in fines or incarceration. In most cases, the state develops and enforces the laws. Without laws, there would be social chaos and possibly anarchy. Laws are most often clearly defined and communicated to members of society so that adherence to the laws is uniformly observed. Members who violate laws are sanctioned, which serves to communicate to the other members of society the penalties for non-conformity.

Material Culture: the physical artifacts representing components of society. (LO 3.1.1)

Material culture can be touched and held, such as weapons of war from ancient Rome or Mexican foods. Both items provide information about their respective cultures. For example, Mexican culinary tastes and dishes have become a part of American culture. The mixture of Mexican and American cultures about food has produced Tex-Mex restaurants.

Mores: informal norms based on moral and ethical factors. (LO 3.2.3)

Mores serve the function of controlling moral and ethical behavior. The violation of mores is considered a serious offense and dysfunctional within society. An example of breaking a more is when a spouse commits adultery. Cheating on a spouse is considered morally wrong and will be disapproved by many family members, friends, and members of the larger society.

Nonmaterial Culture: ideas and symbols representing components of society. (LO 3.1.1)

Languages, customs, philosophies, morals, and knowledge represent this culture. It is intangible and focuses on concepts and symbolic representations. The pursuit of knowledge is an example of nonmaterial culture. It represents an idea that is prevalent in Western societies. In countries that have extreme poverty and rely on subsistence farming, the pursuit of knowledge would not likely be prominent within the culture.

Nonverbal Language: a system of communication using symbols such as facial expressions, gestures, and body proximity. (LO 3.2.1)

Nonverbal language can provide clues to understanding a culture. For example, do people greet each other with a handshake, hug, or kiss? How much space do people take up regarding personal space when in conversations? Are gestures commonly used, and what gestures are the same within two cultures but have entirely different meanings? These questions provide a beginning point to understanding unique cultures in the U.S. and worldwide. Identifying examples of nonverbal language will provide insight into the structures within the groups or society.

Norms: established guidelines, behaviors, and expectations that are accepted in a given range of social situations. (LO 3.2.3)

The four types of norms are folkways, laws, mores, and taboos. All norms provide a means of providing parameters for behavior among members of society. Without established norms and sanctions to enforce the norms, there would be chaos and dysfunction in society. Each type of norm serves a specific function in controlling behavior. Folkways guide everyday behavior, and taboos address severe violations deemed repugnant by society. Laws and mores

address behavior that falls between these two norms concerning the seriousness of the degree of violation.

Personal Space: the physical region surrounding an individual that is considered private. (LO 3.2.1)

You have heard the phrase, “You’re invading my personal space.” The definition of personal space varies from one society to another. How close do you stand to others in an elevator? How far do you stand from the person in front of you at the cash register? We can better understand the culture by analyzing how individuals address personal space. Determining characteristics, patterns, and preferences for personal space will shed light on social structures within a society.

Popular Culture: cultural characteristics the masses adopted, imitated, and idolized. (LO 3.5.2)

Popular culture is made up of the goods, products, and services patronized by the middle and lower classes of society. Members of the upper classes often patronize it as well. A past example of popular culture is bell-bottom jeans. The flared pants originated in the U.S. Navy during the 1800s but spread throughout North America and Europe for decades until most people knew what bell bottoms looked like.

Real Culture: the actual behavior of members of society. (LO 3.1.1)

This type of culture represents what can be observed and documented in society compared to what is desirable. For example, the American Dream has been a value within the U.S. since its founding and is an example of ideal culture. The real culture is that there is poverty, and many Americans cannot pull themselves up by their bootstraps and achieve the success that is said to be available to everyone regardless of their circumstances. By peeling back the layers of culture, sociologists can determine the existing realities rather than just the platitudes that may simply be societal ideals.

Sanction: a punishment or reward that supports socially approved norms. (LO 3.2.3)

Sanctions enforce norms. For example, a violation of folkways, such as not covering a sneeze, may be met with a disdainful look or an admonishment. Speeding will result in a traffic ticket, and adultery could lead to losing friends and possible repercussions at work and among family members. There are also positive sanctions that reinforce norms, such as verbal encouragement, awards, and promotions.

Sapir-Whorf Theory: a theoretical perspective that suggests that people view society through the framework of language. (LO 3.2.1)

This theory suggests that studying language components, such as verbal and nonverbal language, is important to understand society. We view our social world to a large degree through language as we communicate with others every day. Therefore, to understand a culture, we can analyze the dialect, idioms, slang, hand gestures, body language, and many other aspects of language. Every social interaction provides information about local, regional, or national culture. Language is the window through which we view our social world.

Social Facts: social patterns that are external to individuals and greatly influence our way of thinking and behaving in society. (LO 3.4.1)

Social facts are the material and nonmaterial aspects of society that are outside us but greatly influence our way of thinking and behaving in society. Social facts are often perceived as “normal” in a society. As such, social facts are outside of society’s members but still impact the members of society. Generally, the social facts in society have been in place for generations. For example, in many societies, paper money is a social fact. It has been used as currency for generations. It is outside of our thinking and behavior yet influences both our thinking and behavior.

Society: a group of people who are subject to a common system of political authority and are aware of having distinct identities from other groups (3.x.x)

Society consists of people connected by social relationships within a given territory. Their unique identities are based on their interaction and shared culture. The types of societies range from agrarian to post-industrial. Each type has material and nonmaterial culture appropriate to the needs of its members. Society cannot exist without culture, and culture cannot exist without a society to maintain it.

Subcultures: a distinct set of cultural characteristics shared by a minority of people in the society. (LO 3.3.2)

A subculture is a group whose actions, beliefs, and ways of life set them apart from most of society. Subculture groups are not interested in changing the larger society. Instead, they can live alongside the majority without sacrificing the material and nonmaterial culture that makes them unique.

Sustainable Development: development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. (LO 3.2.2)

This definition is derived from the 1987 United Nations document, *Our Common Future: Report of the World Commission on the Environment and Development*. This document, produced by the Brundtland Commission, was formed in 1983 to determine ways to save the human environment and natural resources and prevent economic and social development deterioration. The report went beyond just global environmental issues, addressed poverty in low-income countries, and how to reconcile economic development with environmental protection. The report solidified the term and definition of sustainable development and launched a global focus with tangible goals to address many issues. In many ways, this report was the catalyst that sparked the sustainability movement around the world.

Symbols: an idea or object that has a shared meaning to groups of people. (LO 3.2.1)

A symbol is a component of nonverbal language and represents aspects of culture. For example, the American flag symbolizes independence, patriotism,

and nationalism. Throughout history, flags have been carried into battle as a symbol representing the beliefs and values of the countries at war. Symbols represent world religions, and car manufacturers' hood ornaments immediately identify the status of the automobile. The BMW symbol represents luxury and German engineering, also reflected in many other German cars and products.

Taboos: formal norms that, if violated, cause revulsion and the most severe social sanctions. (LO 3.2.3)

Taboos are one of the four types of norms. Examples include incest, child prostitution and pornography, and mass shootings of innocent people. The harsh sanctions for these violations can result in life sentences or capital punishment. The penalties are severe and serve as a mechanism of social control.

Technological Determinism: society's technology drives the development of its social structures. (LO 3.2.2)

This theory states that technology is a powerful force that progresses and transforms society. People believe in technology's power to transform our social world and provide solutions for social problems. Technology is viewed as developing social structures, and it determines our future. We do not have much control over technology as it can seem to have a mind of its own and is difficult to guide.

Values: collective ideas about what is desirable and undesirable in society. (LO 3.2.2)

Values are developed as members of a group or society decide what is important and unimportant. For example, honesty is desired over dishonesty. As a value is reinforced within society by adages such as the "truth will set you free" and "a half-truth is a whole lie." Values change slowly over time and can vary by country. In Japan, harmony and group conformity are valued, while Americans value independence and autonomy. Common values provide stability and social cohesion among members of society.

Value Contradictions: conflicting issues between values. (LO 3.2.2)

There are many examples in our everyday lives of values that are contradictory. For example, Americans value nonviolence, but many video games glorify and sensationalize violence. Healthy lifestyles are valued, but on every corner, fast food restaurants and junk food are sold in schools. These contradictions are often difficult to resolve because both values are deeply ingrained in the culture.

Verbal Language: a system of spoken and written words. (LO 3.2.1)

Verbal language is a means by which we can understand cultures as it provides a lens to view our social world. For example, listening to the different languages spoken in NYC demonstrates the cultural diversity that exists in the city. We can learn about a country's cultural characteristics by analyzing historical documents. Verbal language is a stable arrangement of patterns that form structural characteristics in society.