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# CHAPTER 3



## CULTURE

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# SECTION 1: THE BASIS OF CULTURE

- Culture: consists of knowledge, values, customs and physical objects that are shared by members of a society.
  - Culture helps to explain human social behavior.
  - Human behavior is based on culture.
  - Human cultural behavior must be learned (not born with it).
- Society: a specific territory inhabited by people who share a common culture.
  - Culture and society are tightly interwoven.
  - One cannot exist without the other, but they are not identical.

# CULTURE AND HEREDITY

- Instincts: genetically inherited patterns of behavior.  
(Innate/unlearned)
- Culture helps determine human behavior because we cannot operate on instincts alone.
- Heredity affects behavior  
(genetic inheritance)



# CULTURE AND HEREDITY (con'td)

## REFLEXES

Biologically inherited,  
automatic reactions to  
physical stimuli.  
(Baby crying...)

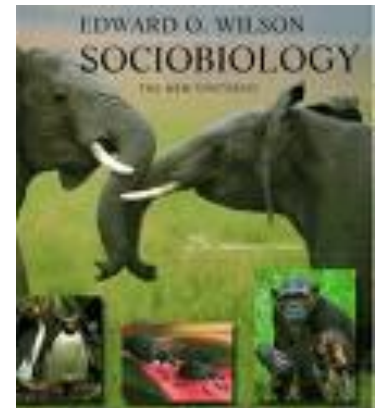
## DRIVES

Biologically inherited,  
impulses to reduce  
discomfort.  
(Eat, drink, sleep...)

# SOCIOBIOLOGY

The study of the biological basis of human behavior

- **Darwin's theory of evolution**: organisms evolve through natural selection.
- Sociologists assume that the behaviors that best help people are biologically based and transmitted in the genetic code.
- **Criticisms of this view**: The importance that is placed on genetics could be used as a justification to label specific races as superior or inferior.
- There is too much variation in societies around the world for human behavior to be explained on strictly biological grounds.



# SECTION 2: LANGUAGE AND CULTURE



## SYMBOLS

Things that stand for or represent something else.

Symbols can range from physical objects, to sounds, smells, and tastes.

# LANGUAGE AND CULTURE



- Language and culture are related:
  - Language frees us, it allows us to create culture.
  - Humans can pass their experiences, ideas, and knowledge to others through language.
  - The process of social learning applies to other cultural patterns (eating, showing patriotism)



# The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis

- **Hypothesis of linguistic relativity:**
  - Theory stating that our idea of reality depends largely upon language.
  - Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf said “language is our guide to reality”.

# SECTION 3: NORMS & VALUES

**NORM:** rules defining appropriate and inappropriate behaviors:

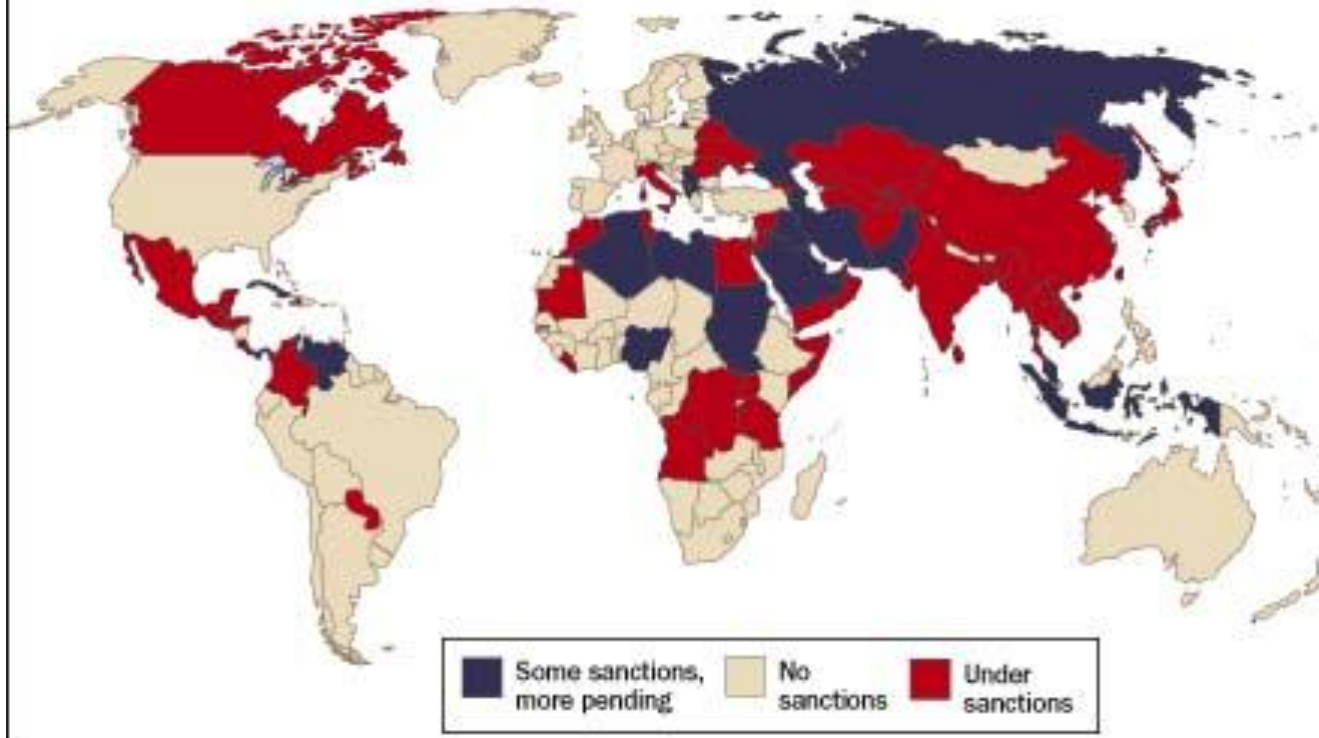
There are three types of norms:

- 1) Folkways – norms that lack moral significance / customary ways of thinking, feeling and behaving. (ex: removing your hat, saying hello)
- 2) Mores – norms that have moral dimensions and that should be followed by members of a society.  
Conformity is a social requirement.  
Taboos – a taboo is a norm so strong that its violation demands punishment by the group.
- 3) Laws – a norm that is formally defined and enforced by officials.

# SANCTIONS

## The blanket of US sanctions

President Clinton has issued more than half the 125 sanctions ever imposed by the US. Sanctions may include prohibitions on financial transactions, trade in certain US goods and services, as well as travel by US citizens to targeted countries. Sanctions are often in response to human rights violations, terrorism, or drug trafficking. More than 75 countries are now subject to, or under threat of, 21 specific sanctions...



# SANCTIONS

REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS USED TO ENCOURAGE CONFORMITY TO NORMS.

## FORMAL SANCTIONS

Sanctions that may be applied only by officially designated people.

Positive sanction: A soldier earning a medal. A student winning an award/scholarship.

Negative sanction: Someone commits a crime/courts. A student is late for class and earns a detention.

## INFORMAL SANCTIONS

Sanctions that can be applied by most members of a group.

Positive sanction: Thanking someone for doing something for you.

Negative sanction: Glaring at someone for bumping into you.



# VALUES



Values are broad ideas about what most people in a society consider to be desirable.

Values form the basis for norms.

(A society that values hard work will have norms against laziness.)

Values are important because they are so general that they are involved in most aspects of daily life.

FREEDOM \* SAFETY \* EDUCATION \* HEALTH

# SECTION 4: BELIEFS AND MATERIAL CULTURE

**BELIEFS** are ideas about the nature of reality, that can be true or false.

**MATERIAL CULTURE** consists of the concrete, tangible objects within a culture (cars, clothes, etc.)

## NON MATERIAL CULTURE

Ideas, knowledge, and beliefs that influence people's behavior.



# MATERIAL & NONMATERIAL CULTURE

- \* The use, meaning, and value of physical objects can vary among societies.

# IDEAL AND REAL CULTURE

A gap can exist between cultural guidelines and real behavior.

## IDEAL CULTURE

Refers to cultural guidelines embraced by members of a society.

Sometimes guidelines are ignored, but it doesn't make them meaningless.

## REAL CULTURE

Refers to actual behavior which often conflict with the guidelines.

Ex: Honesty



# SECTION 5: CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND SIMILARITY

Why does culture change? (3 reasons)

- 1) **DISCOVERY** – the process of finding something that already exists. (ex. Women athletes)
- 2) **INVENTION** – the creation of something new (ex. Science / technological advances)
- 3) **DIFFUSION** – the borrowing of aspects of culture from other cultures.  
(ex. Food – diffuses rapidly)

# CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Social Categories - groups that share a social characteristic such as age, gender or religion.

## SUBCULTURES

The part of the dominant culture but differs from it in some important respects.

Ex: Chinatown

## COUNTERCULTURE

A subculture deliberately and consciously opposed to certain central beliefs or attitudes of the dominant culture.

Ex: Teenage (punk/goth)  
Gangs

# ETHNOCENTRISM

Judging others in terms of one's own cultural standards,  
where you can't imagine things being done any other way.  
It usually leads to prejudice.

## EXAMPLES

Churches, schools, country clubs,  
Regional areas (mid-west, south, New England states)

There are advantages and disadvantages.

# CULTURAL UNIVERSALS

General cultural traits that exist in all cultures

## UNIVERSALS

- Sports
- Cooking
- Courtship
- Division of Labor
- Education
- Etiquette
- Housing
- Family
- Funeral Rites
- Language and music
- Property rights

## PARTICULARS

(not carried out the same way)

Expressing universals differently:

Ex: Caring for children

Goods and services being bought and sold.



# WORKS CITED

Images from Google Images

([www.google.com/images](http://www.google.com/images))

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