



Culture



Social Sciences



# Planning Ahead

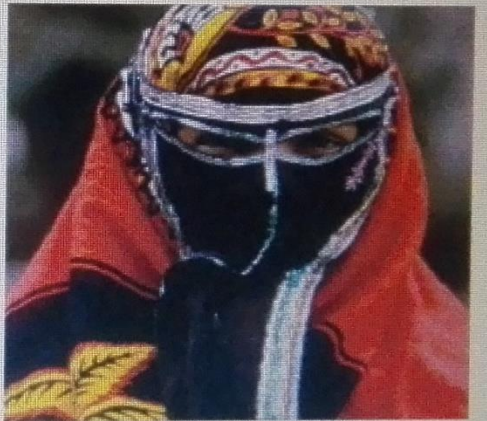
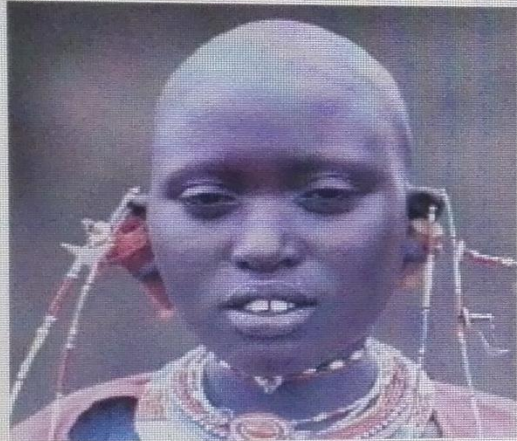
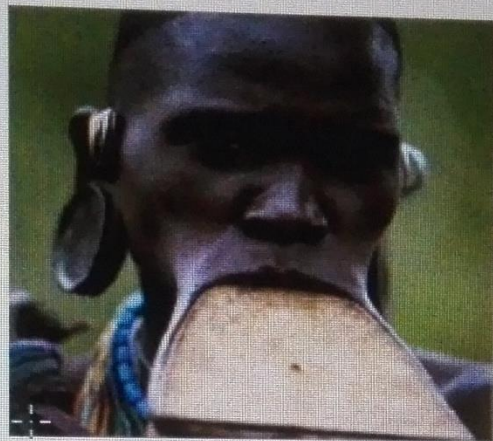
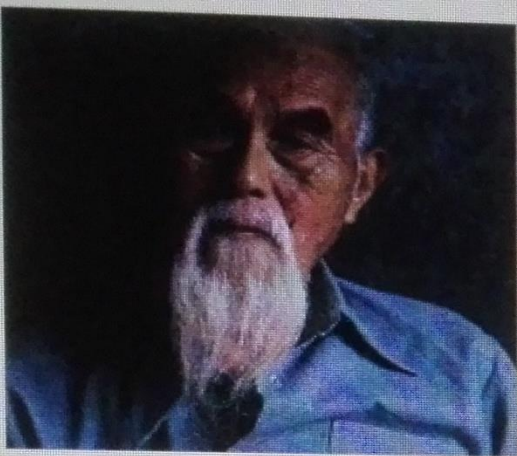


- ❧ Why is culture indispensable?
- ❧ Why do symbols and language underlie in culture?
- ❧ What is the role of norms and values?
- ❧ In what ways are all cultures similar? Different?
- ❧ How can we classify societies?
- ❧ What is the relation of culture with religion?

# What is Culture?



- ❧ Culture refers to social heritage of people.
- ❧ Learned patterns for thinking, feeling and acting.
- ❧ Culture is composed of the shared language, beliefs, values, norms, behaviors and material objects that are passed from one generation to another.
- ❧ *Culture is the ways of thinking, the ways of acting, and the material objects that together form a people's way of life. Culture includes what we think, how we act, and what we own. Culture is both our link to the past and our guide to the future.*



# Kinds of Culture



## MATERIAL CULTURE

- ☞ All the tangible products of a society
- ☞ Examples: housing, cars, clothing, etc.

## NONMATERIAL CULTURE

- ☞ All the intangible products of a society
- ☞ Examples: laws and punishments, ideas, values, belief systems, norms, attitudes.

# Culture, Nation & Society



- ☞ Sometimes these terms are used interchangeably and wrongly.
- ☞ Culture: Shared way of life.
- ☞ Nation: A political entity, territory with designated borders.
- ☞ Society: Organized interaction of people.

# Importance of Culture



- ❧ Our behavioural patterns, belief systems, principles, and ways of living are the derivatives of our culture.
- ❧ Culture is the invisible bond which ties people together.
- ❧ How we perceive things is largely affected by our judgment skills, preconceived notions, attitude, and emotions. These factors are closely linked with our culture.
- ❧ Culture Shapes Personalities
- ❧ Certain beliefs about health and medical care are a part of all cultures.

# How many cultures?



- ❧ **In the United States, how many cultures are there?**
- ❧ One indicator of culture is language; the Census Bureau lists more than 300 languages spoken US almost half of them (134) are native languages.
- ❧ **How many languages in the world?**
- ❧ **Threats to cultures**
- ❧ **How many cultures in Pakistan?**



# Cultural Relativism

Understanding a culture from the framework of its own standards  
What is considered moral in one society may be considered immoral in another society

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No one has the right to judge another society's customs



# Ethnocentrism

- ∞ The use of one's own culture as a yardstick for judging the ways of other individuals or societies.
- ∞ Ethno. is individual belief that they are better than other individuals for reasons based solely on their heritage



# Culture Shock

- ❧ *Personal disorientation when experiencing an unfamiliar way of life.*
- ❧ Traveling to a new and different location can cause some people to experience severe, personal disorientation, often referred to as....

**CULTURE SHOCK!**



**CULTURE**



**SHOCK**

# The Elements of Culture



- ☞ Symbols
- ☞ Gestures
- ☞ Language
- ☞ Values and beliefs
- ☞ Social norms

# SYMBOLS

*A symbol is anything that carries a particular meaning recognized by people who share a culture.*



1. Symbols are often taken for granted.
2. Symbols can bind people together or separate them.
3. Symbols allow people to make sense of their lives.

- A word, a whistle, a wall covered with graffiti, a flashing red light all serve as symbols
- simple act of winking an eye, which can convey interest, understanding, or insult

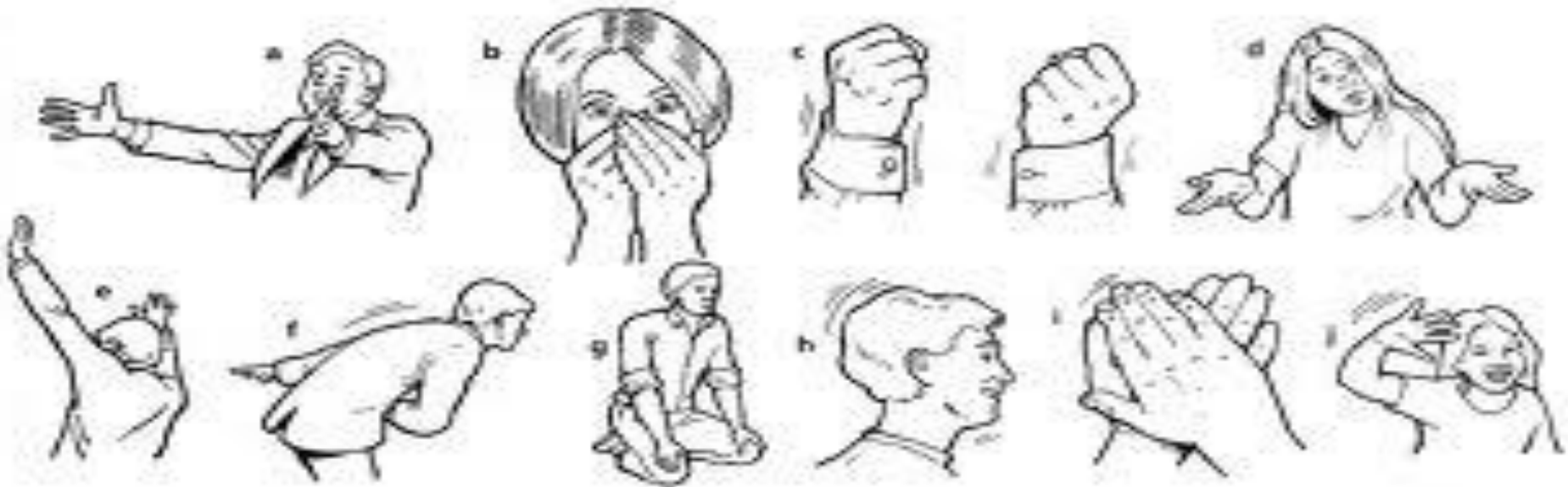
# Gestures

Using one's body to communicate



☞ Gestures are “culture specific”

☞ We know what the gestures below indicate because our culture teaches us to apply certain meanings to them.



# Language

A system of symbols that allows  
Members of a society to communicate  
With one another.

Language Allows “Cultural Transmission” Or The Passing On  
Of Culture Over Generations.

Language Provides A Present, Past and Future.

Language Allows For Understanding.

Oral cultural tradition.

Language helps in shaping reality ~ (Sapir-Whorf Thesis)

# Values



- ❧ Culturally defined standards by which people judge desirability, goodness, and beauty, and which serve as broad guidelines for social living.
- ❧ Values are those concepts that we deem important.
- ❧ This may include education, loyalty, or the conservation of the environment.



# Beliefs



- ❧ Specific statements that people hold to be true.
- ❧ We generally hold beliefs to be true without actual evidence or proof.
- ❧ Beliefs are often connected to our religious or spiritual beliefs.

# Social Norms

Are the Rules and Expectations by Which a Society Guides the Behavior of its members.

In everyday life, people respond to each other with sanctions, rewards or punishments that encourage conformity to cultural norms.



Folkways are often referred to as customs. Breaking a folkway does not usually have serious consequences. Examples include ideas about appropriate greetings and proper dress.



**Mores** are strict norms that control moral and ethical behavior. Unlike folkways, mores are morally significant.



In short, mores distinguish between right and wrong, and folkways draw a line between right and *rude*

Law is a norm that is written down and enforced by an official law enforcement agency.



**Taboos** is a norm that society holds so strongly that violating it results in extreme disgust.

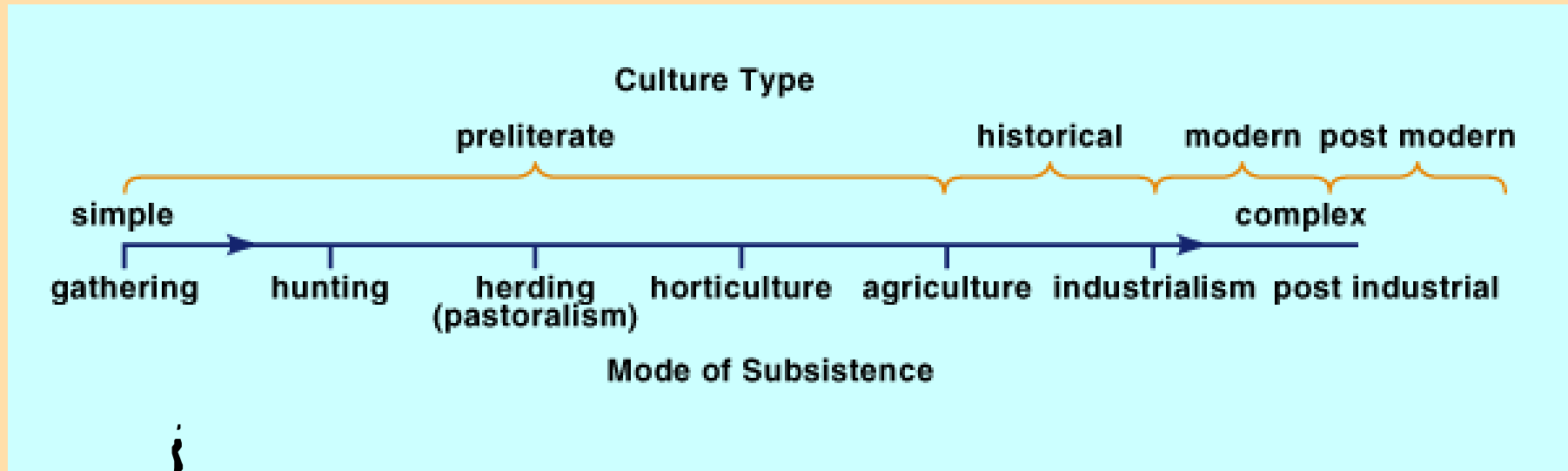


# Cultural Universals



- ❧ Patterned and recurrent aspects of social life that appear in all societies.
- ❧ Anthropologist George Peter Murdock produced eighty-eight categories of general behaviour.

# A Continuum of Cultural Change





# Cultural Diversity



- ❧ Within any given society there are a variety of cultures.
- ❧ Not only are there cultures that integrate with one another in a society, there are also a number of subcultures and countercultures that develop in a given society.
- ❧ Subcultures and countercultures are created by generalizations, occupation, class, lifestyle, likes, dislikes, etc.

Subcultures groups whose members are different enough to set themselves apart from the wider society (not necessarily bad), just different (e.g. Sufi groups, Body builders, etc.)



Counter Cultures groups whose specific culture components are often contradicts with the wider society, often resulting in conflict or perceived as threats to the social order  
(e.g. TTP, some secular groups, etc.)

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# Ideal Vs. Real Culture

MOST PEOPLE TEND TO IDEALIZE THEIR CULTURE ....BUT THINGS ARE SELDOM AS "IDEAL" AS THEY SEEM!



## ❧ IDEAL CULTURE

❧ Cultural ideals held out as examples of how things should (or could) be.

## ❧ REAL CULTURE

❧ What things are really like for a people in a given culture.

## ❧ EXAMPLES:

❧ Islamic Society Dream of Muslims but fail when time comes to contribute

❧ Equal opportunity is a value, but seldom reality when examined

# Culture Change

Modification of a society through innovation, invention, discovery, or contact with other societies



Cultural diffusion  
spread of elements from one culture to  
another.



Cultural Leveling process in which cultures become similar to one another due to expanding industrialization and the spread of technology.



# Culture and Human Freedom



## Culture as Constraint

- ❧ Culture have some drawbacks
- ❧ Culture limits our choices
- ❧ It imposes some customs and rituals

## Culture as Freedom

- ❧ Cultural diversity provides freedom of choice
- ❧ It is freedom if one can manage change without really upsetting the old norms