

Communication

between cultures

8TH EDITION

Chapter 3

The Deep Structure of Culture: Lessons from the Family

Key Ideas

- Social Institutions and deep structures of culture
- The family's influence on culture
- Cultural variants in family interaction

Social Institutions and Deep Structure

- Deep structure is conscious and unconscious assumptions of how world works
 - Unifies collective actions
 - Deals with significant universal questions
- Influenced by social institutions
 - Family (clans)
 - State (community)
 - Religion (worldview/0)

Social institutions and deep structure

- Carry the culture's most important messages
 - Right and wrong
 - Fate of power or free choice
 - Loyalties
 - Where you should reside
 - Preparing for death
- Carry enduring messages
- Carry messages that are deeply felt

Social institutions and deep structure

- Carry messages that deal with personal identity
 - Variety of identities
 - based on “I” / based on “we”*
 - Ethnic and cultural identities
 - views we share with our in-groups*
 - Membership in family, faith, community identifies us

Family

- The importance of family
 - First and chief socializing agent
 - Oldest, most fundamental of all human institutions
 - Most basic unit of society, most basic unit of government
 - Universal

Family defined

A family is any sexually expressive or parent-child or other kin relationship in which people—usually related by ancestry, marriage, or adoption—(1) form an economic unit and care for any young, (2) consider their identity to be significantly attached to the group, and (3) commit to maintaining that group over time.

(Lamanna and Riedman 2009, p.26)

Forms of Family

- Nuclear - two-generation: parent/child
 - common in developed nations
 - elderly reside in retirement communities, nursing homes; to take in aged parents regarded as economic burden, threat to household's privacy, independence
 - exploration and creativity encouraged

Forms of Family

- Extended - includes grandparents, relatives
 - common in developing and underdeveloped nations
 - collection of relatives gathered for economic reasons
 - share workload of raising the children
 - more obedience, more organized around rules

Forms of Family

- Alternate forms
 - Family of orientation - family you're born into
 - Family formed with mate - marriage, life partnership

Transforming families in the U.S.

- Social Changes
 - Economic changes
 - Technological innovations
 - Demographics
 - Gender roles and opportunities for women

U.S. Census Bureau reports that the number of children under the age of 18 living with both parents declined between 2000 and 2010.

Stanford University study calculates that more than 7% of America's 59 million married couples are interracial (compared to under 2% in 1970)

Transforming families in the U.S.

- New family types
 - Traditional” married couples
 - Children living with one parent
 - A heterosexual woman and man who have cohabited and have children, but have never married
 - Two gay men or two lesbians who have adopted a child
 - A single woman or man who has adopted a child

(Andersen and Taylor 2011, pp. 319-323)

Globalization and families

- Mass media
 - New technologies offer family members different set of value
 - Families struggle to blend traditional patterns with new ones
- Migration
 - To escape poverty, wage-earners separated for long period
 - Personal closeness of family deteriorates due to absence
 - Core family values affected

Functions of the family

- Reproduction - allows a culture to perpetuate itself
- Economic - providing for practical needs
- Socialization - teaching important traditions and social skills as well as values and morals
- Identity - most important social identity; precursor to all others

Communication, culture and family

- The family is both the product of communication and the context in which communication takes place
- The family teaches many communication skills
 - Introduces people to language
 - Tells people how to employ language

Cultural variants in family interaction: Gender roles

US	Asia	Latino	Indian	Arab
Males socialized to be successful, aggressive, sexual, self-reliant	Confucianism made men relevant members of society; task functional	Male undisputed authority (oldest son assumes role when father absent)	Hinduism positions masculinity and femininity as oppositional	Islam characterizes males as physically, mentally, morally stronger;
Females: nurturing, sensitive, interdependent, appearance conscious	Women relegated to social dependence; social/cultural functional	Motherhood sacred; women homemakers	Males superior; females devoted to husband's welfare	Koran addresses men only; directs women to obey husbands; Men valued; women viewed through prism of family, honor, chastity

Cultural variants in family interaction:

Gender roles

- Westernization and globalization changing gender roles
 - Women increasingly incorporated into world economy
 - Must guard against applying Western standards to all

Individualism and Collectivism

- Dimension or continuum along which a culture is placed
 - Individualistic cultures value individual over group self-motivation, autonomy, independent thinking
 - Collectivists share intense feelings of dependence, loyalty collective interests of the group placed before personal harmony sought; disapproval avoided

Individualism and Collectivism

- Individualism and the family
 - Emphasis on independence and individual autonomy
 - Mother and child are distinct
 - Child is encouraged to leave the nest
 - Child encouraged to *think for themselves*

Individualism and Collectivism

- Collectivism and the family
 - Family interdependence is stressed
 - Extended families rely on each other for care of children, friendship and support
 - The family is ahead of the individual

Cultural variants in family interaction: The elderly

US	Asia	Latino	Arab
<p>Prefers youth to old age, resulting in age bias. Exceptions:</p> <p><u>Native American</u> <i>elders safe-keepers, carriers of tribal oral traditions</i></p> <p><u>African American</u> <i>grandmothers most central role in family</i></p>	<p>Devotion, obligation to past, elders, ancestors</p>	<p>Elderly respected and cared for</p> <p><i>Compadrazgo (godparents) held in high esteem, integral to family structure</i></p>	<p>Young people encouraged to listen to and learn from elders</p>

Cultural variants in family interaction: Social Skills

- Communicating
 - Starting and stopping a conversation
 - Turn taking
 - When not to interrupt
 - Using silence
 - Appropriate topics of conversation
 - Using humor
 - Use of nonverbal communication

Cultural variants in family interaction: Social Skills

- Aggression
 - Encourage
 - Avoid
- Decision making
 - How to make choices
 - How to come to conclusions
 - In person-oriented families more a verbally expressive child or spouse may play a larger role in decision making

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