

Communication Between Cultures

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Larry A. Samovar

San Diego State University, Emeritus

Richard E. Porter

California State University, Long Beach, Emeritus

Chapter 2 Overview

The Deep Structure of Culture

- **Social institutions that identify us**
- **Family as an institution, family's influence**
- **Cultural variants in families**
- **Country (history) as an institution, history's influence**

A culture's deep structure...

- **unifies a culture**
- **makes it unique**
- **explains a culture's collective action**

Social institutions influence in three primary areas:

- **family**
- **state (community, country, history)**
- **religion (spirituality, worldview)**

Enduring quality of major institutions

- **Transmit wisdom, traditions, customs that make a culture unique**
- **Unfortunately, may also extend bitterness, distrust, hatreds**

Examples of cultural clashes due to differences in deep structure beliefs

- **American Indians protesting sports mascots**
- **Ongoing hatred of Kurds in Turkey, Iran, Iraq**
- **Albanians' independence from Serbia in Kosovo**
- **Han Chinese vs Muslim Hui in China**
- **Ethnic cleansing in Darfur**

Cultures' differing views on relations between...

- **God and man**
- **individual and group**
- **citizen and state**
- **parents and children**
- **man and woman / husband and wife**

and relative importance of...

- **rights and responsibilities**
- **liberty and authority**
- **equality and hierarchy**

Identity is learned through socialization

- **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 as an institution

- **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

- **Single definition difficult due to wide variety of family forms**
- **Good general definition:**

A group of intimates who generate a sense of home and group identity, complete with strong ties of loyalty and emotion and an experience of history and a future

Noller and Fitzpatrick

Forms of family

Family of orientation - family you're born into

Family formed with mate - marriage, life partnership

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*

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*

Four social changes have redefined family

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

U.S. Census Bureau estimates that slightly less than 50% of all families are composed of male/female married couples

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

Globalization and the family

Mass media

- *New technologies offer family members different set of values*
- *Families struggle to blend traditional patterns with new ones*

Migration

- *To escape poverty, wage-earners separated for long periods*
- *Personal closeness of family deteriorates due to absence*
- *Core family values affected*

Functions of family

Reproduction - allows a culture to perpetuate itself

Economic - providing for practical needs

Socialization - teaching important traditions and social skills

Values and religion - environment within which values and morals develop

Identity - most important social identity; precursor to all others

Communication proficiencies - expression, affection, argument

Communication, culture, and family

Thinking globally and cross-culturally means developing an awareness of the context in which families live: their cultural practices and traditions, and environment and economic resources they do or don't have and how these affect their daily lives

Cultural variants in families: Gender roles

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

Westernization and globalization changing gender roles

- Women increasingly incorporated into world economy
- Must guard against applying Western standards to all

Cultural variants in families: Individualism / Collectivism

Dimension or continuum along which cultures 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*

Cultural variants in families: Age

Age-grouping the only universal factor other than gender that determines a person's position in society

U.S. Prefers youth to old age, resulting in age bias. Exceptions:
Native American elders safe-keepers, carriers of tribal oral traditions
African American grandmothers most central role in family

Asia Devotion, obligation to past, elders, ancestors

Latino Elderly respected and cared for
Compadrazgo (godparents) held in high esteem, integral to family structure

Arab Young people encouraged to listen to and learn from elders

Other cultural variants in families

- Social Skills
- Aggression (encourage, avoid)
- Communication skills

Country (history) as an institution

- **What a culture seeks to remember and pass on tells you about the character of the culture**
- **Many present-day conflicts extend back centuries**

History shapes cultural identity, values, goals, expectations

- U.S.
- First settlers mixed English values with new beliefs, Manifest Destiny
individuality, lack of formality, efficient use of time
 - Non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants produced first multicultural nation

- Russia
- Largest (area) country in the world, today in transition
 - National paranoia toward outsiders due to hostile neighbors, occupations
 - Historically dominated by autocratic rule, Communist sociocultural structure

- China
- World's oldest continuous civilization; 1.3 billion people
 - Natural barriers isolated physically; labor-intensive agrarian lifestyle
 - Self-perception of superiority in language, education, politic, art, intellect
 - Reforms in 1970s led to today's market-driven economy; GDP 3rd in world

- India
- World's largest democracy; 1.1 billion people, 2000 ethnicities, 18 languages
 - Buddhism, Hinduism arose; Islam arrived, creating communal hatred
 - British rule ended 1947; India (Hindu) and Pakistan (Muslim) split
 - Reforms led to rise in global economy, but disparity in social strata

- Mexico
- Pre-Columbian, Spain invasion, Mexican-American war, Revolution of 1910
 - NAFTA, Maquiladora factories; immigration issues with U.S.

- Islamic
- World's second-largest religion behind Christianity
 - Western values perceived as detrimental

Next ...

Chapter 3: Worldview

Cultural explanations of life and death

