

# Cultural Dimensions of Globalization

Lecture 20 (Nov. 27)



Asheville Folk Dance Festival

<https://www.romanticasheville.com/folkmoot.htm>

# Lecture Outline

- Defining Culture
- Cultural homogenization and difference
- 3 Approaches to Investigating Cultural Dimensions

# Approaches to Examining Cultural Dimensions

- Material and Non-Material Culture (Art, Ideas)
- How Other Flows (Commodities, Finance, Resources, Etc.) Impacts Local Culture
- The Language Used to Communicate

# Culture Is:

- What We Think
- What We Do
- What We Produce

## Properties of Culture:

- Shared
- Learned
- Symbolic
- Integrated
- Superorganic



<https://www.japan-guide.com/e/e4105.html>

Yakushiji (薬師寺) Japanese Buddhist Temple constructed in 7<sup>th</sup> C. A.D.



# Defining Culture: Diverse Definitions

**Topical:**

Culture consists of everything on a list of topics, or categories, such as social organization, religion, or economy

**Historical:**

Culture is social heritage, or tradition, that is passed on to future generations

**Behavioral:**

Culture is shared, learned human behavior, a way of life

**Normative:**

Culture is ideals, values, or rules for living

**Functional:**

Culture is the way humans solve problems of adapting to the environment or living together

**Mental:**

Culture is a complex of ideas, or learned habits, that inhibit impulses and distinguish people from animals

**Structural:**

Culture consists of patterned and interrelated ideas, symbols, or behaviors

**Symbolic:**

Culture is based on arbitrarily assigned meanings that are shared by a society

# Culture as Meaning System

"The concept of culture I espouse. . . is essentially a semiotic one. Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretative one in search of meaning...(Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 1973, pp. 4-5)"

Culture is "public because meaning is"--systems of meaning are necessarily the collective property of a group. When we say we do not understand the actions of people from a culture other than our own, we are acknowledging our "lack of familiarity with the imaginative universe within which their acts are signs" (Ibid, pp. 12-13).

# Sameness/Difference in Material Culture Under Globalization

Sameness



Ikea

Difference



Guca Trumpet Festival, Serbia

# 1<sup>st</sup> Approach: Flows of Global Material Culture

- Music
- Theatre, Sports
- Internet, Blogs, Facebook
- Media, Local Language TV for diaspora communities
- Literature, Written Word



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Approach: Globalization of a Commodity and the Impacts on Culture



Sugar

# 3<sup>rd</sup> Approach: Globalization of Languages



# Summary

- Defining Culture
- Cultural homogenization and difference
- 3 Approaches to Investigating Cultural Dimensions
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Approach: Flows of Global Material Culture
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Approach: Cultural Impacts of Commodity Globalization
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Approach: Globalization of Languages