

CULTURE AND CIVILIZATION

MODULE1

DEFINE CULTURE?

- Culture was defined earlier as the symbols, language, beliefs, values, and artifacts that are part of any society. As this definition suggests, there are two basic components of culture: ideas and symbols on the one hand and artifacts (material objects) on the other. The first type, called **nonmaterial culture**, includes the values, beliefs, symbols, and language that define a society. The second type, called **material culture**, includes all the society's physical objects, such as its tools and technology, clothing, eating utensils, and means of transportation.

SYMBOLS

- Every culture is filled with **symbols**, or things that stand for something else and that often evoke various reactions and emotions. Some symbols are actually types of nonverbal communication, while other symbols are in fact material objects. As the symbolic interactionist perspective discussed in [Chapter 1 “Sociology and the Sociological Perspective”](#) emphasizes, shared symbols make social interaction possible.

NORMS(SYMBOLS)

- Cultures differ widely in their **norms**, or standards and expectations for behaving. We already saw that the nature of drunken behavior depends on society's expectations of how people should behave when drunk. Norms of drunken behavior influence how we behave when we drink too much.
- Norms are often divided into two types, **formal norms** and **informal norms**. Formal norms, also called *mores* (MOOR-ayz) and *laws*, refer to the standards of behavior considered the most important in any society. Examples in the United States include traffic laws, criminal codes, and, in a college context, student behavior codes addressing such things as cheating and hate speech. Informal norms, also called *folkways* and *customs*, refer to standards of behavior that are considered less important but still influence how we behave.

OTHER ELEMENTS

- The elements of a culture:
- As no two cultures are exactly alike they do all have common characteristics. [\[8\]](#)
- A culture contains:
- **1. Social Organization:** Structured by organizing its members into smaller numbers to meet the cultures specific requirements. Social classes ranked in order of importance (status) based on the cultures core values. In example: money, job, education, family, etc.
- **2. Customs and Traditions:** Rules of behavior enforced by the cultures ideas of right and wrong such as is customs, traditions, rules, or written laws.
- **3. Symbols:** Any thing that carries particular meaning recognized by people who share the same culture.[\[9\]](#)
- **4. Norms:** Rules and expectations by which a society guides the behavior of its members. The two types of norms are mores and folkways. **Mores** are norms that are widely observed and have a great moral significance. **Folkways** are norms for routine, casual interaction.[\[9\]](#)
- **5. Religion:** The answers to their basic meanings of life and values.
- **6. Language:** A system of symbols that allows people to communicate with one another.[\[9\]](#)
- **7. Arts and Literature:** Products of human imagination made into art, music, literature, stories, and dance.
- **8. Forms of Government:** How the culture distributes power. Who keeps the order within the society, who protects them from danger, and who provides for their needs. Can fall into terms such as [Democracy](#), [Republic](#), or [Dictatorship](#).
- **9. Economic Systems:** What to produce, how to produce it, and for whom. How people use their limited resources to satisfy their wants and needs. Can fall into the terms Traditional Economy, [Market Economy](#), [Command Economy](#), [Mixed Economy](#).
- **10. Artifacts:** Distinct material objects, such as architecture, technologies, and artistic creations.
- **11. Social institutions:** Patterns of organization and relationships regarding governance, production, socializing, education, knowledge creation, arts, and relating to other cultures.

SOCIOLOGY OF CULTURE

- The **sociology of culture**, and the related cultural sociology, concerns the systematic analysis of culture, usually understood as the ensemble of symbolic codes used by a member of a society, as it is manifested in the society. For Georg Simmel, culture referred to "the cultivation of individuals through the agency of external forms which have been objectified in the course of history". Culture in the sociological field is analyzed as the ways of thinking and describing, acting, and the material objects that together shape a group of people's way of life.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CULTURE AND CIVILIZATION

- Culture is an end (values and goals) in itself while civilization is a means (tools and techniques) to an end. Cultural facts like belief, art and literature—prose, poetry or novel, etc., gives direct satisfaction to the reader while equipment's of civilization such as cars, computers, refrigerators, etc., do not give direct satisfaction, until and unless they do not satisfy our wants. Thus, civilization is utilitarian. It just helps in achieving the end.
- 2. Culture has no value in itself but it is a measurement by which we can value other articles of civilization. We cannot determine the value of culture, i.e., beliefs, norms, ideas, etc., but the value of anything can be determined by its measurement standard. Culture is a measuring rod or weighing balance.

DIFFERENCE

- 3. Civilization is always advancing but not culture. Cultural facts like dramatic plays or poems may not be necessarily better today than the plays or poems of Shakespeare?
- 4. Civilization is easily passed without much effort to the next generation but not culture. Cultural facts, e.g., any art or a piece of literature, cannot be learned without some intelligence. It requires a few pains to understand it. Contrary to it, the equipment's of civilization (building, TV, etc.) can easily be inherited without much or any use of energy and intelligence.
- 5. Civilization may be borrowed without making any change but not culture. Borrowing any cultural fact like any political, economic or social belief requires some necessary alteration to adjust in the new cultural environment while this is not necessary to make any material change in the civilizational equipment's such as TV, computer, etc.
- 6. Culture relates to the inner qualities of society like religion, customs, conventions, etc., while civilization relates to the outer form of society such as TV, radio, fans, etc.

DIFFERENCE

- 7. Culture is more stable than civilization—cultural change takes place in years or in centuries but civilization changes very rapidly.
- 8. Variability of cultures may not be accompanied by variability of civilization at different places. Civilization may be similar in variable cultural areas. For instance, there is a great difference between American and Indian cultures but there are many similarities in their civilizational equipment's.
- 9. Culture is a social fact, i.e., creation of the whole society while civilization, i.e., the invention of any equipment may be by a single individual. Any ordinary person can affect any change in the civilizational equipment but for any modification or alteration in any cultural fact requires the power and imagination of whole society

WHAT IS CIVILIZATION?

- A **civilization** (or **civilisation**) is any [complex society](#) characterized by [urban development](#), [social stratification](#), a form of government, and [symbolic](#) systems of communication. Historically, "a civilization" has often been understood as a larger and "more advanced" [culture](#), in implied contrast to smaller, supposedly primitive cultures.^[1] In this broad sense, a civilization contrasts with non-centralized tribal societies, including the cultures of [nomadic pastoralists](#), [Neolithic](#) societies or [hunter-gatherers](#), however sometimes it also contrasts with the cultures found within civilizations themselves. Civilizations are organized densely-populated settlements divided into [hierarchical social classes](#) with a ruling elite and subordinate urban and rural populations, which engage in [intensive agriculture](#), [mining](#), small-scale manufacture and [trade](#). Civilization concentrates power, extending human control over the rest of nature, including over other human beings of a society.

ETHNOMOLOGICAL MEANING

- Civilization, as its etymology suggests, is a concept originally associated with [towns](#) and cities. The earliest emergence of civilizations is generally connected with the final stages of the [Neolithic Revolution](#), culminating in the relatively rapid process of [urban revolution](#) and [state-formation](#), a political development associated with the appearance of a governing elite.