

Culture and communication

Culture

- “Culture” stems from the Latin word *cultura* (to cultivate the ground);
- Concept emerged in 18th century;
- Notions of *high* (linked to the arts – classical music, literature, painting) and *low culture* (“popular culture”, “folk culture”).
- Criteria that distinguish one culture from another: *race, ethnicity, geographical location, nationality, religious or political affiliation, sexual orientation, gender, age, disabilities, language, clothing, food, etc.*

Culture is:

- That complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society (English anthropologist E.B. Tylor, 1967).
- cultural group's characteristic way of perceiving the man made part of its environment. The perception of rules and the group's norms, roles, and values are aspects of the subjective culture (Triandis, 1972).
- A learned set of shared interpretations about beliefs, values, and norms, which affect the behaviours of a relatively large group of people (Lustig and Koester, 1993).
- A learned patterns of perception, values and behaviors, shared by a group of people, that are dynamic and heterogeneous. Culture also involves emotions and feelings (Martin, J.N., Nakayama, T.K., 2011)

Criteria that distinguish one culture from another:

- *race, ethnicity, geographical location, nationality, religious or political affiliation, sexual orientation, gender, age, disabilities, language, clothing, food, etc.*

Culture consists of :

Manner

Ideas

Mindset

Customs

Values

Beliefs

Rituals

Ceremonies

Religious beliefs

Social institutions

Laws, norms

Myths and legends

(written and unwritten)

Individual identity

Arts

Behavior

Approaches to culture

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 behaviour, a way of life.
Normative	Culture is ideals, values, or rules for living.
Mental	Culture is a complex of ideas, or learned habits, that inhibit impulses and distinguish people from animals.
Functional	Culture is the way human solves problems of adapting to the environment or living together.
Structural	Culture consists of patterned and interrelated ideas, symbols, or behaviours.
Symbolic	Culture is based on arbitrary assigned meanings that are shared by a society.

Facets of culture

Culture is learned

- *Enculturation* –process of learning one's culture.
- *Socialization* – lifelong process of inheriting and disseminating norms, customs, values, providing an individual with the skills and habits necessary for participating within their own society; the means by which social and cultural continuity are attained.
- Importance of *language*.

We learn:

Beliefs - basic understanding of a group of people about what the world is like or what is true or false.

Values - refer to what group of people defines as good or bad or what it regards as important.

Worldviews – our overall way of looking at the world.

Traditions – customs or rituals that have been passed down from one generation to another.

Cultural norms – shared expectations of appropriate behaviors.

Facets of culture

- Culture is shared;
- Culture is expressed as behavior;
- Culture is dynamic and heterogeneous;
- Culture is symbolic;
- Transmitted cross-generationally;
- Adaptive;
- Integrated.

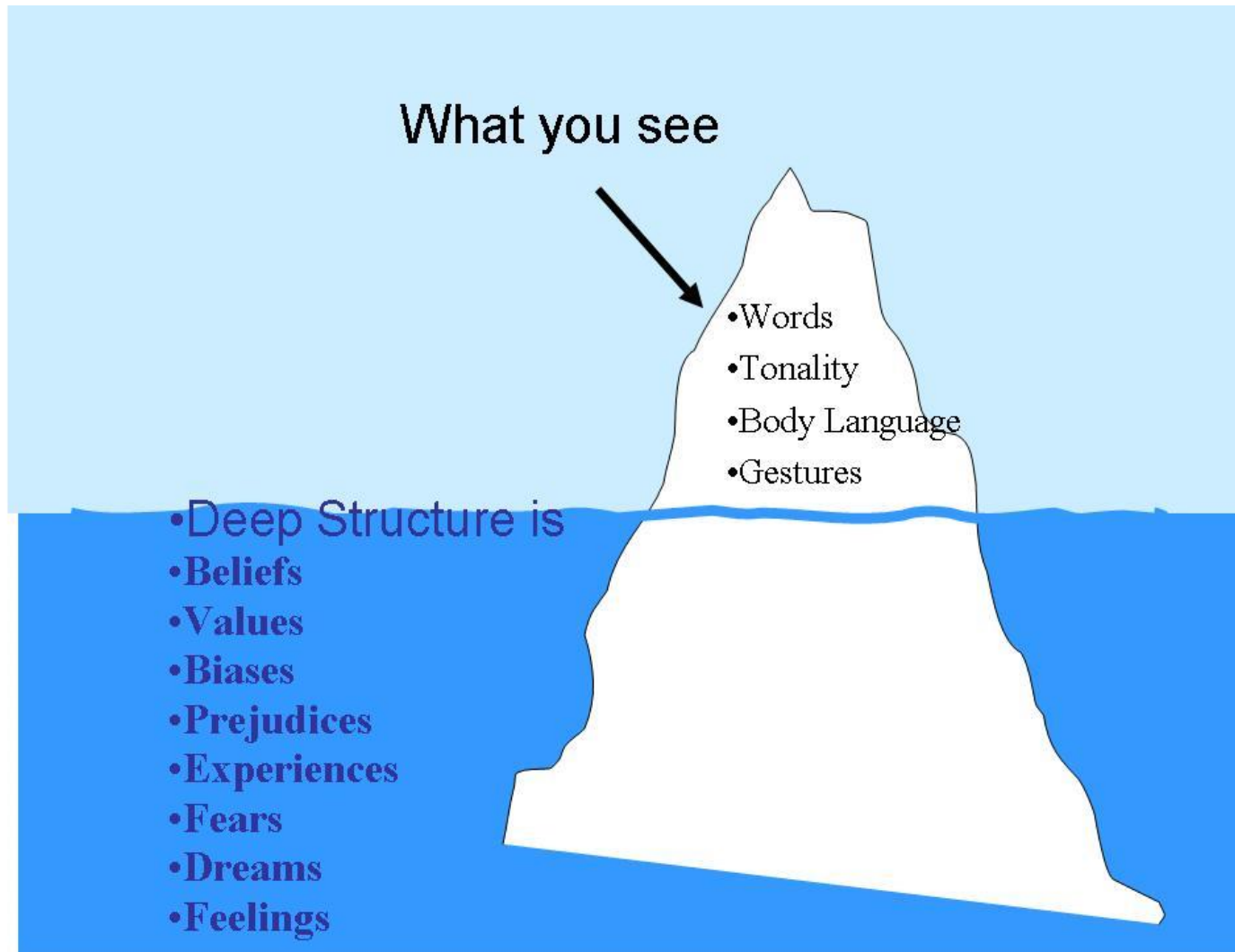
Culture as „program of the mind“

Hofstede

- Culture – the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another.
- Programs of mind, or patterns of thinking, feeling and potential acting, work like computer software – they tell people (subconsciously) how to walk, talk, eat, socialize, etc.
- Culture is the mental software or „unwritten rules of social game“ that „programs“ the mind, become our core beliefs or the standard against which other culture is judged as strange or eccentric.

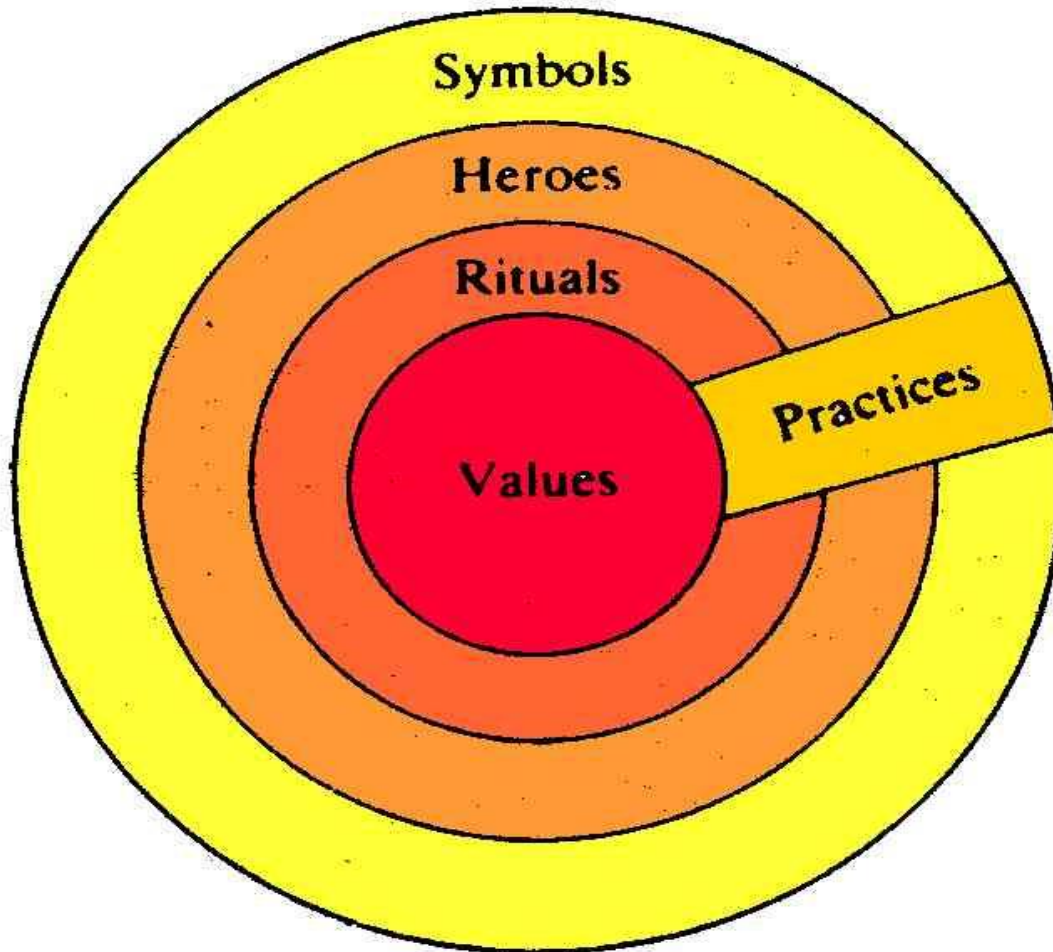
Culture as Iceberg

Hofstede



Culture as Onion (or Tree)

Hofstede



Culture as Onion (or tree)

Hofstede

- Cultures are different in terms of ***symbols, rituals, heroes*** and ***values***.
- **Symbols** (e.g. words, gestures, different objects) exist on the surface of culture and maybe recognised by the insiders of culture.
- **Heroes** – real, imagenary or dead figures that are valued in their culture, embody certain values and beliefs.
- **Rituals** – patterns of behaviour encoded with social meaning (e.g. marriage ceremonies).
- Symbols, heroes and rituals form **practices** that are **visible**.
- **Values** – the core of cultures, organized around oppositional dichotomies (e.g. good-bad), deep-rooted, difficult to change.

Communication

- A symbolic, interpretive, transactional, dynamic, contextual process in which people create shared meanings.

Culture as communication

Culture is a code we learn and share, and learning and sharing require communication. Communication requires coding and symbols, which must be learned and shared. **Communication and culture is inseparable** (Smith, 1966).

- Cultural characteristics (e.g. norms, customs, rituals, laws) are developed, shaped, transmitted and learned through communication.
- Communication practices are largely created, shaped and transmitted by culture.
- **Culture is communication and communication is culture.**

References

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