

Types of Culture

Definition of Culture

Culture refers to the shared beliefs, values, norms, customs, behaviours, and material objects that are passed from one generation to another within a society. It is the way of life of a group of people.

Components of Culture

Material Culture: Physical objects created and used by members of a society (e.g., buildings, technology, clothing).

Non-material Culture: Intangible aspects such as beliefs, values, norms, language, and customs.

Elements of Culture

Symbols: Anything that carries a particular meaning recognized by people who share a culture (e.g., flags, gestures).

Language: A system of symbols that allows people to communicate.

Values: Shared ideas about what is good, desirable, and proper.

Norms: Rules and expectations by which a society guides the behaviour of its members.

Folkways: Everyday customs without serious consequences if violated (e.g., dress codes).

Mores: Norms with moral significance; violations have serious consequences (e.g., laws against theft).

Taboos: Strong prohibitions (e.g., incest).

Beliefs: Specific statements that people hold to be true.

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Dominant Culture: The culture of the most powerful group in society.

Subculture: A group within society that differentiates itself from the dominant culture (e.g., youth subcultures).

Counterculture: A group that rejects and opposes significant elements of the dominant culture (e.g., hippies in the 1960s).

Cultural Universals

These are elements, patterns, traits, or institutions that are common to all human cultures worldwide (e.g., family, religion, language).