Culture: What does it involve? Views and Definitions.

"There is not one aspect of human life that is not touched and altered by culture." (Hall 1977, quoted in Samovar, Porter: 7)

What does culture involve?

➢ practices, representations, language and customs of any specific society;
➢ shared social meanings, that is the various ways we make sense of the world;
➢ meanings are generated through signs > language (Hall; quoted in Barker et al.: 7);
➢ from the all-encompassing ("it is everything") to the narrow ("It is opera, art, and ballet") (Samovar, Porter: 7);
➢ 1) Cultural values, 2) worldviews, and 3) social organizations (family and state). (ibid.: 8.);
➢ Abstractions such as values, morals, ethics, conceptions of right and wrong, conceptions of good and evil, the logical system, conceptions of justice and laws, rituals, spiritual and religious beliefs (Johnson: 189 – 192)

Definitions of culture

• The deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, social hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relationships, concepts of universe and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving. (Samovar, Porter: 8)
• Learned perceptions – attitudes, believes and disbelieves, worldviews and behaviors that are acceptable and expectable by a cultural group.

Views of culture

➢ There are multiple cultural systems we participate in: native culture of origin, local cultures in which we interact in daily life, global culture created through mobility and mass communication. (Johnson: 186)
➢ Cultures are not "pure" but "are the product and creations of human contact between and across both groups and time." (ibid.: 185.)
➢ Those "who share in a culture also display a broad range of individual differences, and contrasting cultures in contact with one another also display the products of their mutual influence." (ibid.)

> ➢ Culture is "complexity arising from 1) the communication and intermingling of peoples with different origins, identities, and allegiances and 2) the interplay of the real and imagined past, the perceived present, and the projected future …" (ibid.)

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