#### 1 Unit 2

Culture and Identity

## 2 The Nature of Identity

- Cultural identity refers to one's sense of belonging to a particular culture or ethnic group.
- Social identity develops as a consequence of membership in particular groups within one's culture.
- Personal identity refers to people's unique characteristics, which may differ from those of others in their cultural or social groups.

## 3 Terms for cultural groups

- Dominant culture may imply superiority of the main-stream culture
- Majority culture is emotionally charged for some and may not be an accurate term, i.e., the majority group may not be the dominant culture
- European American, African-American, & Latino/Latina are the types of inclusive terms that refer to cultural rather than racial groups
- Symbolic ethnicity refers to an ethnic identity that is only relevant on specific occasion, and does not significantly impact everyday lifee, such as showing you're Irish on St. Patrick's Day
- Sub-group labels: minority culture, co-culture, microculture

### 4 Examples of Microcultures

- USA: largest are Latinos & African-Americans
- Often a source of conflict in the world today
- · China: Tibetans, Uyghers
- Russia: Caucasians
- · Germany: Turks
- Spain: Basques, Romas

# 5 Group Variability

- Membership groups
  - Involuntary membership groups like...
    - Age, race, gender, family
  - Voluntary membership groups like...
    - · Politics, religion, job, economic status
    - Not always voluntary, as in...
      - China, Saudi Arabia
- Non-membership groups
  - May not want or be eligible to join
  - India as example: caste system

#### 6 Roles

- One's relative position in a group with an expected set of verbal and nonverbal behaviors
- · Formal roles—well-defined behavioral expectations
  - Explicit: violations can lead to removal from role
  - Example: political office
- Informal roles—expectations vary greatly
  - Implicit: learn from experience
  - Example: family role
  - In U.S. increasingly learned from "experts"

#### 7 Roles and Communication

- Linked: roles prescribe with whom, about what, how we communicate
- Roles vary significantly across cultures
  - Family roles
  - Student/teacher roles in US vs. Korea
    - "One should not step even on the shadow of one's teacher"

## 8 Communication Theory of Identity

- Assumes that identities:
  - Have an affective (emotional), cognitive (thought), & behavioral component.
  - Can vary in terms of:
    - Scope (how many people hold the identity)
    - Salience (how important the identity is to a person at a given point in time)
    - Centrality (how important the identity is usually to a person's self-esteem)
    - Intensity (how vocal or expressive one is about an identity)
    - Changeability (some aspects of identities change and others do not)

## 9 Aspects of Identity: Example

## 10 Stereotyping

- Stereotypes are categories with attitude
- · Widespread in all cultures; established early in life
- Stereotyping involves members of one group attributing characteristics to members of another group.
- These attributions can carry a + or -evaluation
- · Can lead to prejudice and discrimination
- In US, race & gender groups often stereotyped
- In other cultures, different social groups

## 11 Ethnocentrism

- The tendency for any people to put their own group in a position of centrality and worth while creating and reinforcing negative attitudes and behaviors toward out-groups.
- Natural, universal condition
- Can have positive side
  - Fosters patriotism, solidarity, cooperation

## 12 Relationship of Ethnocentrism & Racism

- Racism: biologically based superiority
- Unlikely to be racist and not ethnocentric
- Possible to be ethnocentric and not racist
- Ethnocentrism is considered innate.
- Racism is considered learned.
- Racism especially seen in difficult economic times
  - Out-groups as scapegoats
- Xenophobia: Fear of strangers