

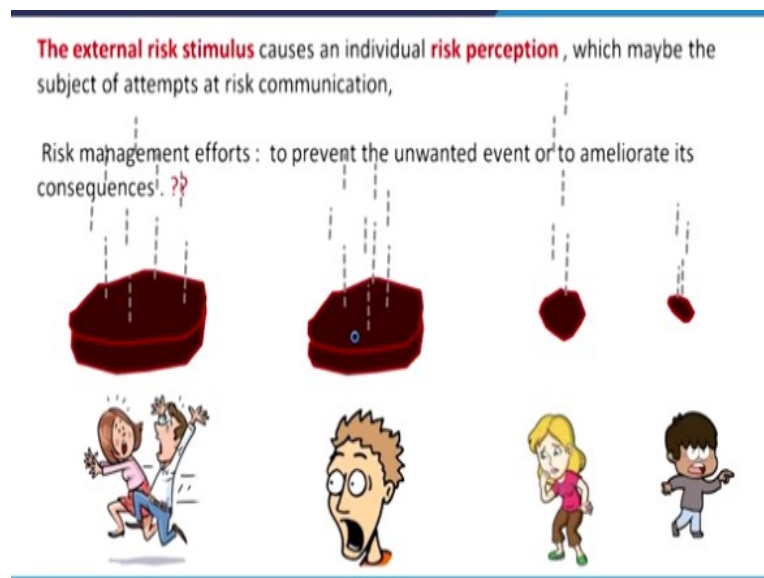
Disaster Recovery and Build Back Better
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Lecture – 29
Cultural and (Disaster) Risk

Hello everyone, welcome to the lecture series on disaster recovery and build back better, in this lecture we will discuss about culture and risk particularly in disaster risk. This lecture would provide an idea, the kind of perspective about why culture is so important in disaster risk management or understanding risk perception also, we will look into what is the meaning of culture, why culture exists in society.

And how it may influence people's perception and perspective of risk in our context this disaster risk, we may not give a direct connotations of disaster but we will look into culture and risk from a broader perspective, okay and I am Subhajyoti Samaddar, I am from Disaster Prevention Research Institute, Kyoto University, Japan. Generally, in the conventional theory, they think that individual's perception of risk matter, how big the hazard is; the exogenous variable.

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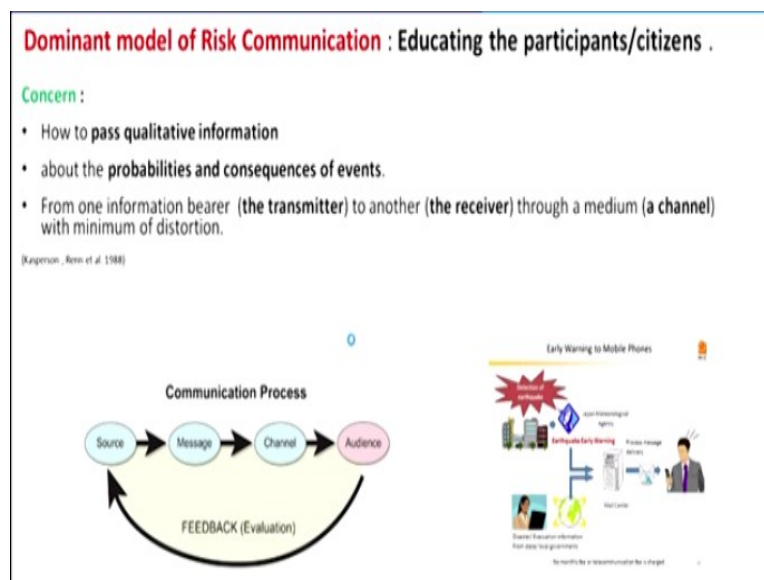
If the hazard is bigger in size in magnitude, then people have greater, higher risk perception but it's a very conventional idea now, so external risk stimulus is so important in conventional risk perception theories or practices, okay and risk management effort; conventional risk management effort is therefore to prevent the unwanted event and to

ameliorate its consequence, to reduce the consequence of an unwanted hazardous event, okay.

Here, you can see in this picture when the stone is bigger, people have greater perception of risk when the stone is smaller, people have less risk perception; a low risk perception. Now, in the conventional theory, conventional understanding of disaster risk or any risk is that individuals who are at risk they are the passive recipient of risk that means, they do not manipulate, interpret, construct the meaning of risk.

They see what is there so, risk is very objective, what is; it depends on the probability of a particular hazard and the consequence of that hazard, okay that how it would cause human losses, property damage. Like, in this theory all individuals are like a passive recipient like a baby, okay and there is of an independent stimulus that is the hazard.

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And for them, the particular way of communicating risk or risk communications in case of early warning, there is a recipient that is the source, they send the message and through some particular channels like mass media, televisions, radio, newspaper to the audience in order to help them to prepare and to know them the magnitude and the consequence of a particular hazard.

If you look into the right-hand side that is showing that some methodological agency, some scientific bodies, they will collect information; scientific informations and then through the mass media, they pass it to the people; common people who are at risk. So, for them the

dominant model of risk communications for them, the major concern is how to pass qualitative informations to the people about risk.

When they are sending this informations, they focus in 2 aspects; one is the probabilities and consequence of that event, from one information bearer, that is the transmitter to the receiver or the from the source transmitter or receiver okay so, these way they communicate the risk.

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- But information transmission is only one part of communication.
- It also involves **developing shared meaning** among individuals , institution and communities and establishing relationship of trust.



But people are arguing or from our practices, from the field notes, researchers are reporting from their studies that this is may not be enough, well transforming the information is very important and very critical component of risk communications in order to enhance the resiliency of the local communities but that is not enough that's simple okay, it is because how people interpret, the meaning of risk it varies from individual to individuals, groups to groups, okay.

So, one group something is risky, for another group of people, it is not that risky so, we need a kind of consensus shared meaning of risk here, you can see the example like a snake when you someone is thinking that snake is dangerous, it is a risky animal, a person is escaping from that place, someone is trying to beat him, kill him, someone is taking picture, someone is praying to the God.

So, people have this stimulus is the same is a snake but people have different meaning, different perceptions about the risk so interesting, so what risk is; it's not, does not really depend on the magnitude and consequence, the probability and consequence of hazards but it

also depends how people perceive; perceived that hazard, okay. Now, as the conventional theory, they are focusing more on the probability and consequence and hazard kind of event as disaster.

They generally have 2 way of conventional risk management; disaster risk management, they are very directive, they are saying that okay in order to reduce the risk, you should do that you have some specific goals and you have some specific actions to perform and while doing it, they are also very reactive, they think that this is the only way to solve the problem, okay, this is the only way to solve the problem.


So, target is set and now how to implement that target and that's it but there are some other perspective of risk, they are saying that it is not that external stimulus that determines people's risk perceptions but it is the socio-cultural context or individual characteristics that define the way people perceive risk. Here, we are talking from the cultural perspective of risk.

For the cultural perspective of risk, individuals are active information seeker, they are not the passive recipient of information but they also collect informations to develop their own perception, own perspective okay, like you can see for someone it is 6, for someone it is 9, for someone it is 4, someone it is 3, so how you are looking at it from which angle, from which perspective, it matters.

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The perceiver is not an individual, but an institution/ organization

- ❑ Institutional structure is the ultimate cause of risk perception.
- ❑ Creation of **shared meaning and trust** over the transfer of quantitative information.


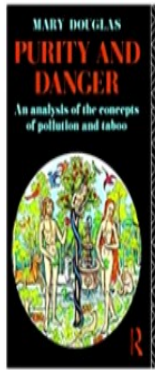


Here is another good example that how dad sees it, how the kid experience it and how mom sees it, so it's not actually maybe that does not matter the length but when it varies from person to person, individual to individual, group to group, institution to institutions, this same stimulus we see in a different perspective, in a different angle. The perceiver is not an individual of course, they are a kind of institutions or kind of organizations they are living with other group of people.

So, institutional structure of at which the individual belong is the ultimate cause of risk perception so, creation of shared meaning and trust over the transfer of quantitative information.

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Purity and Danger (1966)



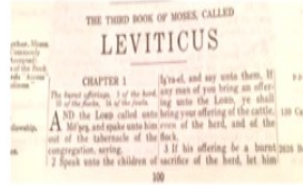
- Modern Classic of Anthropology.
- Moral risk rather than environmental risks!
- Focus : Relationship between dietary restriction and the social order.

So, there was an outstanding work by Purity and Danger, 1966 considered to be modern classic of anthropology, so Mary Douglas in her book in 1966, Purity and Danger is talking about the cultural importance of risk, the cultural perspective of risk that we would look into why, what is culture and why it is so important, what why she is arguing that culture is so important when we are talking about disaster risk management or risk management.

Why we need to understand the cultural aspect otherwise, we were missing, we cannot communicate enough, we cannot manage risk enough, we cannot encourage people to prepare against risk, let us look.

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Leviticus

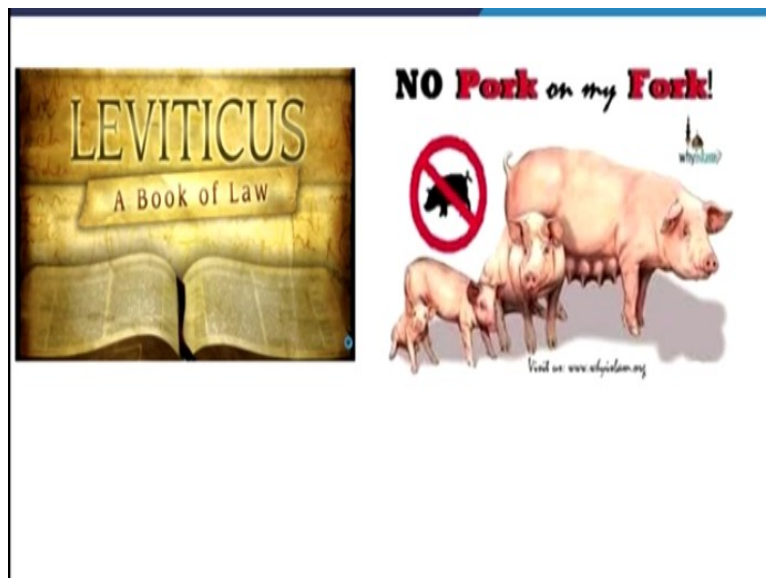


Leviticus, third book of the Pentateuch, c.1400, from Late Latin **Leviticus** (liber), literally "book of the Levites," from Greek to Leuitikon bibliōn, from Leuites, from Hebrew Lewi. ... The **Hebrew title** is Torah Kohanim, literally "the law of the priests."

The **Book of Leviticus** explains five basic themes that relate to the life of holiness: a holy God; a holy priesthood; a holy people; a holy land; and a holy Savior

She was studying Leviticus, I think you know Leviticus, it's a kind of religious book; law book that gives you guidelines about the morals; what to do, what not to do, what do it okay, so this is a third book of the Israeli people, the Jews people and the book of the Leviticus from the Greek word it has came, the book explained the five basic themes that relate to the life of holiness, okay, a holy God, a holy priesthood, a holy people, a holy land and a holy saviour.

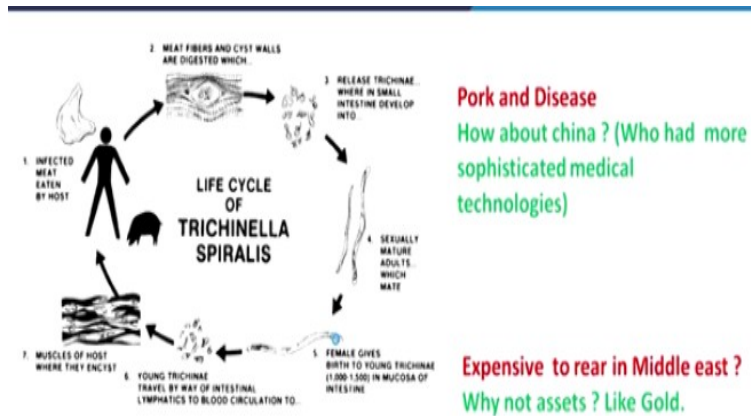
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Now, these Leviticus to the Israeli people they are saying hey, no pork on my fork, you cannot eat pork okay, no pork on my fork so, Mary Douglas was curious why Israeli people are restricted not to have pork, why they cannot eat pork, what is the reason, why they seen it is a kind of risky pollutions, she was not looking into disaster research but she is looking into pollution that is also a kind of risk.

What is purity and danger okay, why it is so danger? So, somebody argued that the pork it carries some kind of parasites so, if you are eating, consuming pork you will be affected by parasites, your body will be affect, consuming also parasites; Trichinella spiralis.

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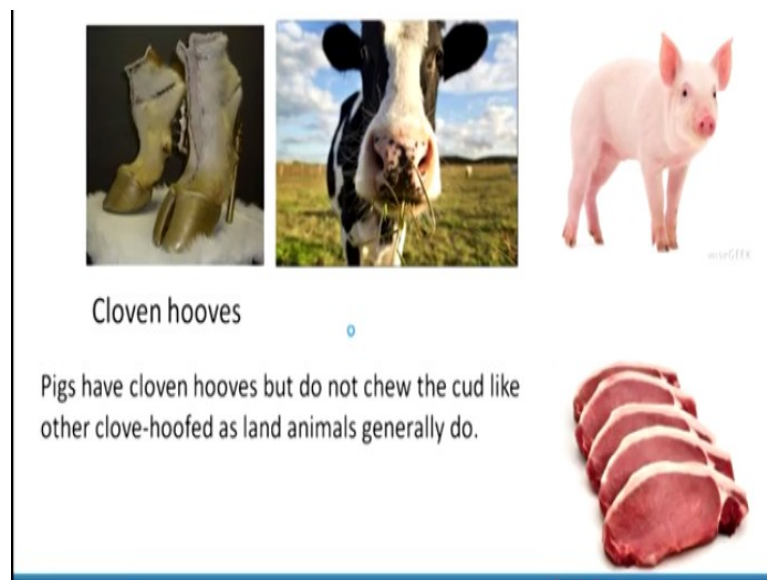
So, this particular parasite that enter into your body through pork and that's why the Israeli people were given the mandate that you should not eat the pork but Mary Douglas was arguing okay, if it is really that so it could be scientifically true or not true that does not matter but if it is really true that why that time, the China which was scientifically and technologically much advanced than many other countries who are eating pork.

There was no restrictions for Chinese people not eating pork but in Israeli, in Israel there was the restrictions of not eating pork, why there is a difference, his channel is much advanced, they didn't know about these parasite issues that not to eat pork for their health reason, is it really the health reason that's why the Israeli people saying that do not eat pork is risky, then somebody who was arguing that may be in Israel, you would not get pork; pigs.

So, as a result, you should not eat pork because they are very less in number so, if you were eating pork, you will endanger these species; the existence of that species. Now, somebody is now, Mary Douglas is arguing that if it is so, then you can use it like a kind of asset, okay like gold, you can sell it, when as an endowment and you can say the more pork I have, more rich I am, more pigs I have but they didn't do, they only put restrictions.

So, then she came there was a study and she came to know about the Taxonomic anomalies dietary restrictions, what is that, do you know what is the meaning of taxonomic anomalies dietary restrictions? Well, some foods are clean according to the Jews people and some are not so clean, so why it is so? So, Mary Douglas was trying to understand why this is so and then she came up with the idea, taxonomic anomalies on dietary restrictions.

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Now, what is taxonomic anomalies on dietary restrictions? Mary Douglas found that according to the Leviticus, according to the Jews Israeli, people cannot eat pigs because pig is; pigs are anomalies, like pigs have cloven hooves like cow or horse but they do not chew the cud like other cloven hooves as land animals generally do like horse or cow they have cloven hooves and they do chew cud.

But only pig they don't do chewing the cud, so that's why they are anomalies okay, so they have cloven hooves but they do not chew the cud but other those who have cloven hooves generally they do chew the cud, so that's the difference we can see and that's why it is an anomaly.

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Anomaly

Live on land but no legs!

In case of snake, you should not eat snake according to Israeli Jews law because they live on land but they have no legs that's very rare, you would not find any other animals that live on land but no legs so, if most of the animals they are on land, they have legs so, if someone does not have legs but living on land, this is should be considered as anomaly, okay; taxonomic anomalies.

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Shellfish



Anomaly

Live in the water, yet lack the fins and scales characteristics of true fish

The Parts of a Fish



Also, shellfish; shellfish is considered to be fish, they live in the water yet they lack fins, scales, characteristics of true fish, they do not have fins or grills, okay, so you should not eat shellfish because is an anomaly. So, here what is polluted, what is dangerous to eat are given the list; unclean food and clean food, okay.

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□ They are monsters abominated by the Lord and by his chosen people.

And they are considered unclean foods considered to be monster okay, abominated by the Lord and by his chosen people, so you should not eat these unclean polluted anomaly animals or species, okay.

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□ But why should the Israelites uniquely care about classificatory anomalies ?

✓ Douglas finds that such concerns are not unique to the Israelites but thrive today in support of the social structure of many tribal societies.

But why should only Israeli uniquely care about classificatory anomalies? Douglas was, of course, arguing that such concerns are not unique to the Israelis but thrive today in support of social structure or many other tribal societies.

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Hindu Dietary Practices

- ♦ Many are vegetarians
- ♦ Cows are sacred
- ♦ Often avoid pork
- ♦ No crabs, snails, crocodiles
- ♦ Numerous birds restricted








Photo by Adam Jones adamjones.freeservers.com
Madurai, India.
June 2008.

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Even within the Hindu practices, the reason could be different but we can see that many foods are considered to be polluted, dangerous and many people are vegetarian. Cows are considered to be sacred that's why you should not eat cow and we and they often avoid the pork, no snails or crocodiles, you cannot eat and numerous birds are restricted in Hindu dietary practices.

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Muslims

'Halal'

'Haram'

Similarly, in Muslim culture also, the concept of Halal and Haram actually distinguish what is risky to it and what is not, what is pure, what is dangerous or polluted okay so, risk according to that way, it's not the external stimulus that determined but risk is basically, culturally constructed, we are culturally biased.

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Risk is cultural constructed

- We are culturally biased
- How people perceive and act upon the world around them – depends on their “way of life”
- Way of life a combination of social relation and cultural bias.

So, how people perceive act upon the world around them depends on their way of life culturally, biased means nothing better wrong, I think good or bad, it’s more about the way people, in one the lens they have, they are looking into it okay, the way people look into the outside world.

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So, what is culture then, if it is so important, let us look here that what is the meaning of culture, when it is defining our risk perceptions, not only risk perception, it defines many things but how, what is the meaning of culture and how the impulse control and shape our risk perceptions? Well, this is we human being, right and this is a cow, this is dog, this is lion, are we different? Yes, we are different well, physically we are different.

They have 4 legs, we have 2 legs, they don't have hands, we have 2 hands, of course, we are physically different but also socially or emotionally, intellectually we are also different, they cannot speak, we can speak, we have language.

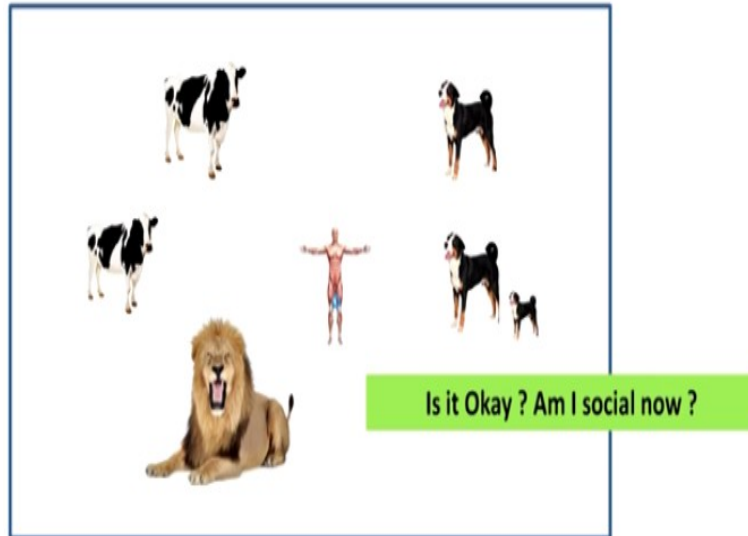
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Now, if I want you to go to an island, where I can give you all the gadgets you want, all the luxury items, a swanky building and all the Internet facilities, a good car but all the foods, any kind of foods you want from any country, any dress you want to wear, want to have, I can give you, provide you and I ask you to go to an island, live there, a condition is that there is no other human being, no other people there and you have no internet connection, phone connections.

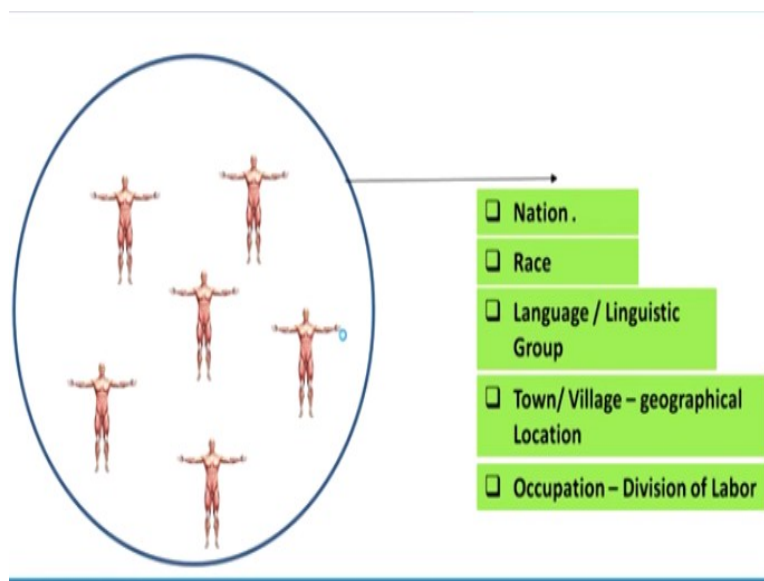
And you will stay there; will you stay there; well, some people may be very exceptional, they will stay there but I am quite sure that large number of populations maybe 99% population or maybe more than that, you would say that I would not agree to go there, why; I do not want to go there, I have all the facilities, all the things I want to achieve there is there, all the things I want, all the foods, all the dress, all the cars, gadgets, all I have; luxury life.

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But still I do not want to live there because why; because we are social animals, we cannot live in isolation so, if instead of that, I send dogs or maybe cow, lion, can we call it kind of they are my companions, I can stay with them, am I social now; basically, no.

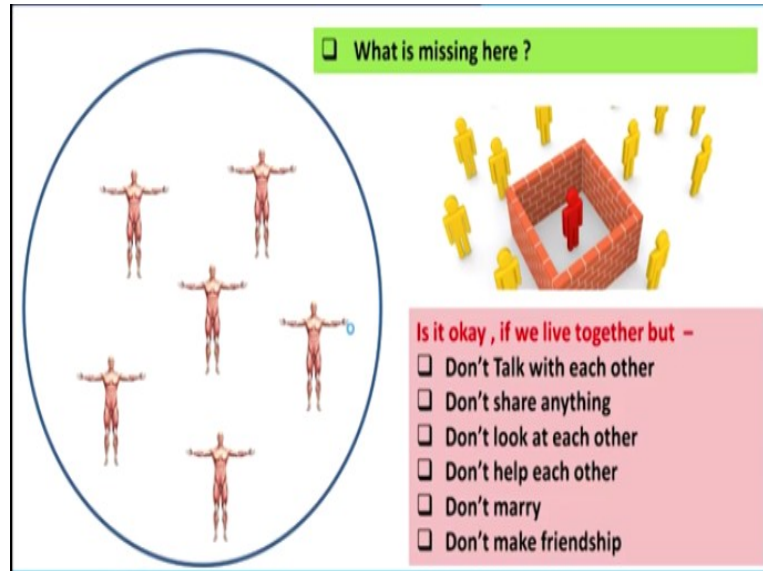
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I need fellow members who look like me, who can talk to me and with whom I can interact with so, this other fellow, not only dogs, cats, lions but I want the human being right, so it could be that someone is from my own country, it depends on someone's nations, race or maybe same linguistic group or maybe some coming from the same town and village, geographical locations or same occupations.

So, we all comprise, want to live together, sometimes based on nation, race, linguistic groups, town, occupations, we want to live together and that's how we form, create society and community okay.

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Now, if I want to live there, okay and what is missing here like 3, 4, 5 people coming from same nations or same linguistic group or maybe same hometown, they are living together, what is missing there in this diagram, what is not there; that a society needs a human being are missing, human beings are missing. So, what I should look into? If I want to say okay, we can live like this, really we agree? No, I will not agree, why?

I will again feel isolated, if I say no, you cannot talk to each other, you cannot share anything with each other, you cannot look at each other, you cannot help each other, you cannot marry, you cannot develop friendship; make friendship so, in that condition; in that conditions you cannot really make yourself social so, what is missing is that simply being a social animal, I want interactions with each other.

So that is also true for any individuals, any social animals, human beings, we always seek interactions with each other and that's how we form society so, interaction is so very important to form necessary to form a society, okay.

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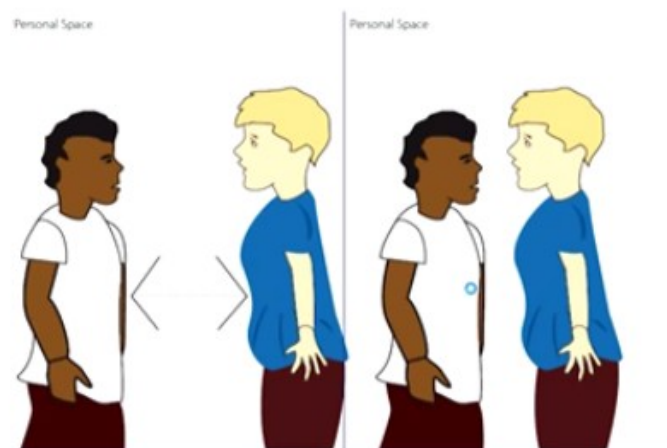
How do you make interaction?
 What helps to make social interactions?
 What kind of social relation

Give it a Name !

So, but then now question is that how do you make interactions, I have different identity and roles, sometimes I am a father, sometimes I am a son, sometimes I am a friend, sometimes I am a teacher so, the way I talk to my students, I talked to my friends, these 2 interactions are different so, how to control like suppose, if at the middle of the night, I call you and say hey, hello how are you, well this is not socially accepted, nobody would bother that one, okay.

So, how do you make interactions, what helps to make social interactions and what kind of social interactions I should do; you will define that one.

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And so suppose, if I am very close to someone when I am talking to him, is it okay or should I maintain some distance.

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Or maybe in the train, there is elder person standing besides me, I am not offering her seat, is it okay?

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If somebody is saying to me, hi or hello generally, we say hello are hi, if I say okay I don't know the meaning of hi or anything well, we are not social right, so our interaction is not going on well.

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So, people are interacting but they are not effectively interacting, there is something missing, people want to smoke, they are smoking but they are bothering others, is it okay? If someone is telling me thank you, other people are saying that okay you were welcome.

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We want to maintain social relationship



Now, we want to maintain that social relationship, somebody is saying Namaste, I am saying Namaste, okay, handshake; we are returning with handshake.

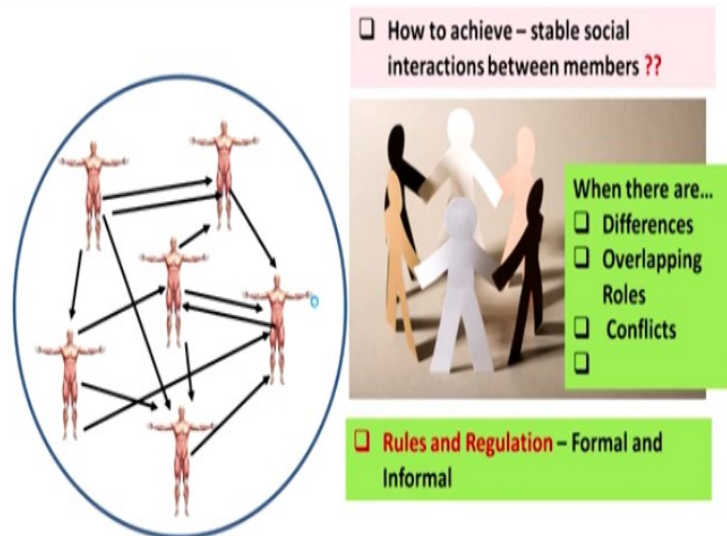
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When it is more difficult to maintain social relationship?

Why society can not always maintain social relationship?

And when it is more difficult to maintain social relationship okay, why society cannot always maintain social relationship?

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So, then how to achieve that one, that how we can maintain that social order, these social interactions okay, that is very important. Now, why we cannot do it because we have different mind, different perspective, overlapping roles and conflicts we have, we possess okay and so, we put rules and regulations upon interactions between individuals or between groups, formal and informal rules and regulations.

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Rules and Regulation



Like sometimes, some rules are very formal like it's written that please do it at your home, you cannot do it, it is completely, explicitly and very fun written and some are sometimes that a very formal that you cannot smoke here, you cannot eat here but people are on a queue where nobody told them to do that but they are doing it, it's very informal manner, it is a kind of showing the manners to others; respect to others.

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Culture ??

As the ways of

- Doing
- Being
- Explaining

Then, this is a culture that tells you what to do and what not to do, doing, being, explaining like for example in the left hand side, you can see that this is a market in Paris, okay and this is another market in US, they are doing the same thing, they all came in a market.

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But they have a different way of marketing style, doing shopping; this is considered to be an marriage and institutions but it is completely different in 2 different culture like, in case of United States people tend to view marriage as a choice between two people based on mutual feeling of love but in case of Hindu marriage, maybe in not in every cases but in a lot of cases is arranged through an intricate process of interviews and negotiations between two parties, two families, right.

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Here, the two partners have very limited choice to make decisions by their own or when we are talking about family, you can look in the left-hand side an Indonesian Muslim family, in the right-hand side, a Christian nuclear family in Europe so, they are very different but they are both considered as family, okay.

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Or maybe cow on the road, Indians won't be surprised seeing cow on the road but a foreign people particularly, Western people very surprised seeing cow on the road.

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Culture is Lens



Well, this is very important and this is very interesting that this lady thinks that other lady wearing a burka is everything covered but her eyes are what a cruel male-dominated society okay she thinks that it's a very male-dominated society because everything is covered only eyes are open, on the other hand, that other lady with burka is saying that nothing covered but her eyes are open so, what a male-dominated society.

So, both of them is perceiving that they are coming from a male-dominated society because based on their dress pattern, okay so, culture is a kind of lens through which you look into the society how it is okay.

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Elements / Components of Culture

- ✓ Symbols
- ✓ Language
- ✓ Values and Beliefs
- ✓ Norms

So, what are elements of culture; we have symbols, language, values, beliefs and norms.

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Symbols

Humans, consciously and subconsciously, are always striving to make sense of their surrounding world.

dog greeting

people greeting

Symbols

- Signs
- Gestures
- Objects
- Words

- ❖ Something to which people attach meaning and that they then use to communicate with one another" (Henslin 2007a:39)
- ❖ Anything that stands for (or shared meaning attached to it) something else

Symbol is the most critical important part of culture because it is a human being who can only interact through using symbols, no other animals can do it, we can use symbols like sign or gesture, objects and words; we can use variety kind of symbols to reciprocate informations, okay. If you see this one, you can understand that this is where you can get drinking water also, we can show various fingers too to tell the meaning to others, communicate with others.

Also, it could be written as a word to communicate with others okay so, we have different kind of symbols that human views as a part of culture.

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But also it varies from culture to culture this symbol, what is the meaning of this one for example, maybe in India, this is chota or thoda, it is very small amount, okay but look into other what other people in other countries they think.

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ITALY

What exactly do you mean?

In Italy, it means that what exactly, do you mean.

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Or in Greece that is just perfect; that is just perfect, the same meaning, a same object but different meaning.

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The different meanings to different cultural groups, in Egypt have patience, be patient okay.

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Universal Meaning



Some meanings, some gestures are very universal like smile, if I smile you understand I am happy, okay and it is almost universal but for example, the thumbs up, okay in United States, it is a kind of positive reinforcement, in Russia and Australia it could be an offensive curse for this one, what is the meaning of this one to you okay?

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“hello,”

“goodbye,”

“no thank you,”

“I’m royalty.”

For someone is hello, for someone is goodbye, oh no, no, no thank you and for some people, I am royalty.

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The Meaning of this red light depends on the **context**



so, also like this colour; red colour, the colour is red but it has different meaning in different cultural or different context. In the left-hand side, it means there is a police, there we understand that okay this is the police, something is an emergency, in the right-hand side, it is the red light that means you have to stop and in the middle, it means actually a brothel; the prostitutions.

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Language is constantly evolving as societies create new ideas. In this age of technology, people

Today we have –

- ☐ Nouns - “e-mail” and “Internet,”
- ☐ Verbs - “downloading” “texting”

Twenty years ago, the general public would have considered these nonsense words

So, the meaning of this red light depends on the context similarly, we have language symbol used for written communications okay like nowadays, we are talking about emails, internets, downloading, texting which was not there just maybe 20 years before okay or maybe 30 years before so, which is very new to us.

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Beliefs & Values

- Values and Beliefs

Elements of Culture

Now, another important component of culture is the values and beliefs okay.

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Values are a culture's standard for discerning what is good and just in society.

Values → Good / Bad ; Ugly / Beautiful ; Right / Wrong ;

Sought / avoided ; Acceptable / Unacceptable ;
Desirable / Undesirable ; Ethical / Unethical

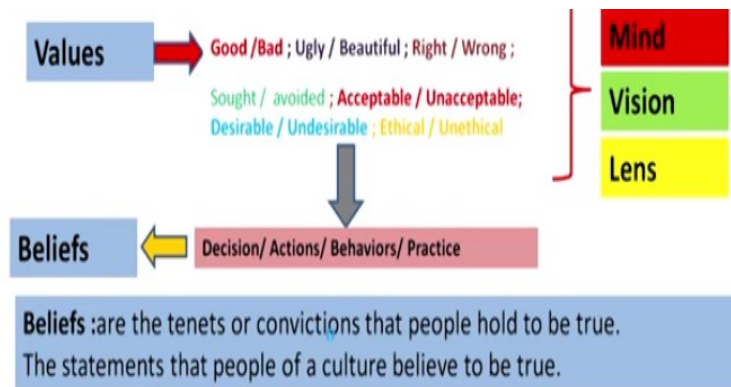
Represent personal or socially preferable modes of conduct or states of existence that are enduring



What is that? Values are culture standard for what to do, what is good, what is not good to decide okay, so when somebody is gambling or somebody is very flamboyant or somebody is taking alcohol, we have some kind of values, somebody saying is good or bad, ugly or beautiful, right or wrong, it could be also kind of accepted or unaccepted, desirable and undesirable, ethical unethical.

So, what is ethical unethical, acceptable unacceptable, these are all our values, how do you decide that taking alcohol is bad or good, from being flamboyant is good or bad, gambling is just our values, right, just our values.

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And culture create these values to give us some kind of mind, vision and lens so, what is good and bad, ugly and beautiful, right and wrong this is we see from cultural perspective, cultural lens and culture gives us this mind, this vision and this lens to see the objects, no object is right or wrong, no object is ugly and beautiful, it is that we which we give the meaning to them right.

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- Individuals in a society have specific beliefs, but they also share collective values
- **Beliefs** : Americans commonly believe in American Dream :
Anyone who works hard enough will be successful and wealthy
- **Value** : American value that wealth is good and important

So, we have this cultural perspective and these values then come into beliefs, okay and individuals in a society have different beliefs that translate this one.

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→ An individualistic culture - meaning people place a high value on individuality and independence (e.g. USA)



→ Collectivist Culture : The welfare of the group and group relationships are a primary value (e.g. Japan)

So, this is American society and they believe in individualistic culture, on the other hand, we have Japanese society which is more in collective culture.

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A simple gesture, such as handholding, carries great –
symbolic differences across cultures.

How would Americans react to these two soldiers or Arabian friend ?

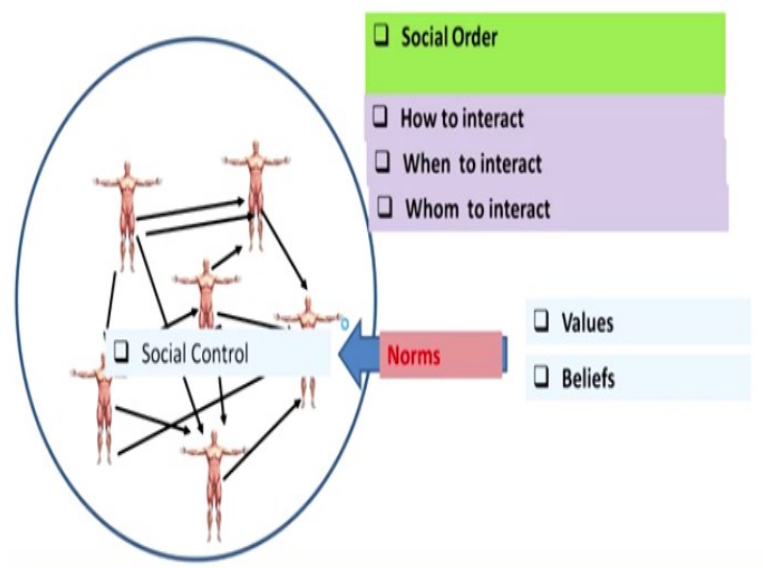
Homosexual ??

In many parts of Africa , the Middle East, India, Pakistan - it is considered **NORMAL** for men to hold hands in friendship. (**Friendship/ Solidarity**)

Values also vary from culture to culture.

This is could be considered in Western culture as a kind of homosexuality but in many part of Africa and Middle East this is considered to be as not homosexual but solidarity and also friendship showing friendship. So, how the same thing varies from culture to culture, so in order to put those values and beliefs into practice, we have generally norms. So, what is good ugly, how to control that one these values okay.

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Then so, how to maintain that social interactions, we put social control that we called social norms okay.

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And these social norms are sometimes formal, sometimes very informal like you can put cover your hands when you were sneezing.

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Not Approved



Or your; you should not do cheating or you should not drink alcohol okay.

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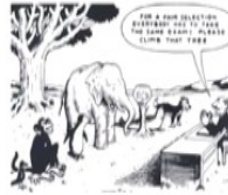


And some are very important norms, some are very unimportant norms.

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Claims

- (i) Culture matters : Preference and justifications shape the world of social relations. Everything human beings do or want is culturally biased !
- (ii) It is possible to distinguish a limited number of cultural types. The typology includes viable combinations of patterns of social relations and patterns of cultural biases (cosmologies). All cultures can always be assessed and classified according to these two dimensions !



So that's how culture works and gives us so, cultural context of risk is saying that culture matters, how people define, what is right or wrong, what is risky or not risky and in so, there are many examples.

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Risk is cultural constructed

- We are culturally biased
- How people perceive and act upon the world around them – depends on their “way of life”
- Way of life a combination of social relation and cultural bias.

But so risk is culturally constructed, how people perceive and act upon the world around them depends on the way of life and way of life; a combination of social relation and cultural bias, thank you very much.