

## MKTG 407: CH 9 (Culture)

[Ioannis Kareklas]

### Slide #1

**Slide Title:** WSU Online Title Slide

Title: Consumers' Culture & Meaning Transfer

Speaker: Ioannis Kareklas

**Audio:**

Music

### Slide #2

**Slide Title:** Slide 2

9 CONSUMERS' CULTURE & Meaning Transfer

*[Video clip icon:*

*<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zvo1q4q8eOM&oref=http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=3&ved=0CD8QtwIwAg&url=http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zvo1q4q8eOM&ei=d2XCUMrWE83MigKKl4CICA&usg=AFQjCNHFstfd2-8crrE0nncrk75sbLVEFA&sig2=9YjntxLx2FUtrPPJ2SPEMQ&bvm=bv.1354675689,d.cGE>*

*[Image of front cover for CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR: HUMAN PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS IN THE WORLD OF GOODS 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. By Avery, Kozinets, Nittal, Raghubir & Woodside]*

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**Audio:**

This lecture deals with culture. As we are going to be discussing today, our culture has a tremendous influence on our consumption behaviors. We are going to formally define culture in our next slide, but for now just keep in mind that it basically refers to a way of life, which includes both the sort of things that one does on a daily basis, as well as the manner in which one does them.

What is considered to be completely normal in one culture may shock members of a different culture. For example, in many Asian countries, they routinely eat critters, various dog parts, snakes, and drink snake blood. This would be utterly unthinkable in most Western cultures.

Some less extreme examples include the fact that in Holland, when you go to a restaurant, you are typically assigned a seat, not a table. So, a party of three may have to share their table of four with a single person dining at the same restaurant.

The French eat their salad after the main course while the Italians and Americans eat it before and the Greeks eat it with their main course. Furthermore, in most of Europe, when you order a soda or even just water, you typically just get one or two ice cubes. As we all know in the

US, the glass is usually filled with ice before we add any soda or water.

The point I am trying to make here is that people of different cultures do things differently and to them, their way of doing things is the natural way and as far as they are concerned, the only way or the way that things should be done.

Please discuss on Angel any other personal examples from your travels to other countries and if you are an international student, please share with others some examples from your own culture or you can tell us about what shocked up the most when you first came to the United States.

Now, please press on the video link on this slide and watch the first couple of minutes of the video *Extreme Eats*. This video is part of the taboo series on *National Geographic*. If you have the time, go ahead and watch the whole documentary as it is fascinating and it illustrates many of the concepts that we are going to discuss in this lecture about how our culture influences our consumption behaviors.

### **Slide #3**

**Slide Title:** Slide 3

9 CONSUMERS' CULTURE & Meaning Transfer

CULTURE – Everything humans learn and share as members of a society

Two Essentials of Culture

- LEARNING
- SHARING

Culture vs. Nature

- ✓ Both within ourselves
- ✓ And in the physical world outside us

*[Image of a geisha]*

*[Image of front cover for CONSUMER BEHAVIOR]* Human Pursuit of Happiness in the World of Goods MYCBOOK.COM © Open Mentis 2013

#### **Audio:**

We are going to formally define culture as everything humans learn from and share with other members of their society. This includes both what to do, but also how to do it. We can think of culture as the unwritten blueprint for everyday living in our society. This blueprint describes how to conduct yourself so as to fit into the society that you live in.

It is basically the implicit knowledge that we acquire simply by living in a social group, about how things are done and what is acceptable to others in our society. This implicit knowledge tells us what is considered edible and what is not, how to dress at home, but also how to dress in public, how to interact with others – for example, it dictates proper conduct between men and women, adults and children, but also between strangers on the street. The violation of these

cultural norms is considered taboo and it is through the recognition of taboo topics that we often become aware of or expectations from others in our culture, which usually go unnoticed.

All cultures have two essential processes: learning and sharing. Therefore, our genetically inherited instincts are not part of our culture since they are not learned. Similarly, our individual idiosyncratic behaviors are also not part of culture since they are not shared. Therefore, our biological nature, that is, to feel hungry and to feel food when we are hungry – these things are not part of our culture, but eating with a fork and knife or eating with chopsticks is part of culture. So, is covering your mouth when you yawn and forming a line at the supermarket.

So, anything that you can think of that we learn and do as members of our society, which means that these things are shared in that society, then all of those things are part of culture. The opposite of culture is nature and this includes both human and physical nature. Our human nature may be to be selfish, but our culture will probably place restraints on our personal desires, sort of like Freud's id being restrained by our superego.

And in the physical world, rivers, oceans and trees are part of nature, but bridges and genetically modified foods are part of our culture. This is because some cultures have bridges while others do not. Similarly, some cultures genetically modify their foods while others do not.

#### **Slide #4**

**Slide Title:** Slide 4

#### 9 CONSUMERS' CULTURE & Meaning Transfer

##### Elements of Culture

- Values
- Myths
- Norms
- Laws
- Rituals
- Customs
- Knowledge, Science & Technology
- Arts

Are the following examples of culture or not?

- . A Starbucks cup of latte
- . A bar of Dove soap
- . A TV commercial for Nike featuring a celebrity
- . A print ad for a medicine focusing entirely on medical benefits

##### Material Culture

All man-made physical things

*[Image of a human face with map of the world layered on it]*

**Audio:**

All cultures consist of the elements that are listed on this slide. Let's briefly each one of them. As we discussed in chapter 5, values refer to society's ideas as to what in life is worth pursuing and how those pursuits should be conducted. So, values include both desirable ends as well as desirable means to those ends.

For example, Western cultures tend to emphasize independence. We value liberty, equality and individual rights. In contrast, Eastern cultures and traditional societies typically emphasize interdependence. They value more the rights of the group, the tribe or the clan and these are seen as more important than individual rights.

Myths – myths are stories that express some key values of a society. For example, the story of Santa Claus is a myth in the Christian world that expresses the value that if you live your life as a good person then good things will come to you. In other words, Santa Claus is going to bring you lots of cool gifts.

Norms – norms are the unwritten rules of behavior. They define what to do and what not to do. Norms are more specific than values. They dictate acceptable and unacceptable forms of behavior. For example, a norm in most civilized societies is to be polite to strangers. Another norm is to give up your seat in the bus to the elderly or the handicapped.

Laws – laws are norms, which carry legal sanctions. For example, smoking in a friend's house may violate a norm, but it is not illegal. Smoking in an airplane is illegal and it is punishable by a fine. Usually society's laws reflect that society's values. For example, the anti-diairy law, which passed in India in 1971, reflects modern Indian society's value of equality of the sexes and the dignity of women.

Rituals – rituals are a set of activities that occur in a fixed sequence and they are also repeated periodically. They can be either utilitarian or symbolic. Utilitarian rituals have useful outcomes such as to shower on a daily basis is good for our hygiene. Symbolic rituals on the other hand, have no practical utility, but they are followed for a tradition and they have symbolic meaning in a specific culture, such as wedding rituals which differ quite markedly in different societies.

Customs – customs are ways of doing something such as when to wear which clothes. Customs can be rituals in some situations, but the two are not always the same. For example, wearing a black tie to a formal dinner is a custom, not a ritual whereas for the bride and groom to do the first dance at a wedding reception is both a custom and a ritual. Rituals always refer to a particular event or a particular activity.

Customs also differ from norms in that the violation of norms is strongly sanctioned whereas the violation of customs is merely ridiculed. For example, walking about naked is a violation of a norm that would be illegal whereas wearing white clothing after labor day is a violation of a custom that is merely socially frowned upon and not even all that much anymore.

Knowledge, science and technology – all knowledge is culture because it is both learned and it is shared. Remember, these are the two essential characteristics of all cultures. Science and technology are also part of culture because they are also learned and shared and they reflect society's beliefs and practices in mastering its environment. For example, the adoption of microwave ovens and wireless communications is as much a part of our culture as is the absence of these things for more protected societies such as the Amish.'

The arts are also part of our culture – music, paintings, theater, literature and so on all represent a society's appreciation of the aesthetic experience and often represent a society's values, obsessions and life conditions. For example, war movies during times of war aim to bring attention to relevant social issues and uplifting theater productions during the Great Depression, which aim to help people cope with the many hardships of daily life.

Now that we have discussed the elements of culture, do you guys think that a Starbucks cup of coffee is an example of culture? How about a Nike TV commercial featuring Michael Jordan? Is that part of our culture? The answer in fact is yes to all of the questions that are listed on the right side of this slide because all of these things are part of our material culture, which includes all man-made objects. These represent the degree of affluence and progress of our societies. So, chairs, soaps, detergents, wine, beer, 3-D television sets – all of these things represent culture. They are all part of our material culture.

## **Slide #5**

**Slide Title:** Slide 5

9 CONSUMERS' CULTURE & Meaning Transfer

*[Image of a man in a suit putting on a Mexican hat]*

*[Image of a man in Arabic attire]*

Getting Culture: Enculturation vs. Acculturation

*[Diagram – FIGURE 9.1 SIX CHARACTERISTICS OF CULTURE]*

*[Image of front cover for CONSUMER BEHAVIOR]* Human Pursuit of Happiness in the World of Goods MYCBBOOK.COM © Open Mentis 2013

### **Audio:**

So, then how do we learn our culture, both as children and as adults? The process of learning one's own culture is called enculturation. Enculturation happens during childhood as we are growing and learning the ways of the world. When we learn a new culture, this is called acculturation.

Acculturation happens when we migrate to a new society or when we spend a considerable part of our lives with people from other cultures. For example, if you are married to someone from another country, you will probably learn about that person's culture through a process of acculturation. Furthermore, immigrants usually learn the host culture through

acculturation while in most cases retaining the culture of their country of birth.

Next, let's talk about the six characteristics of culture. Beyond the two essential processes of culture that we have already discussed – that is, learning and sharing, we can also identify five additional characteristics of all cultures. The first is that culture is learned. As we have already discussed, we are not born with our culture. So, our instinctive behaviors such as crying or laughing are not part of our culture, but knowing when it is proper to do so is part of our culture.

Next, culture regulates society. It does so by dictating what is considered to be proper behavior by offering norms and standards of behavior and by punishing people who deviate from acceptable behaviors through laws.

Third, culture makes living more efficient. Because by definition culture is shared, we don't have to learn things all over again every time we encounter new people and new situations. Therefore, our culture makes our lives more efficient.

Culture is also adaptive. It is a human response to the environment. So, as the environment changes, culture adapts itself to the new environmental conditions. For example, before telephones, it was custom to just show up at your friend's house, but now dropping by is generally frowned upon because you can easily call, text or email someone before you show up at their house.

Culture is also environmental. By that we mean that it is a constant force that surrounds all of our lives at all times and like the environment, we take culture for granted without ever being aware of its presence until someone breaks a norm or a taboo. Then, we become aware of our cultural expectations.

Finally, cultures are hierarchical. We all belong to multiple smaller cultures, which are nested hierarchically within the larger culture of the United States. So, if you are a member of a middle income Hispanic family, then your culture is actually the culture of the middle class that is nested inside the culture of the Hispanics, which is itself in turn nested within the larger U.S. culture.

I am originally from Cyprus, but I am now an American citizen. So, one can argue that my culture is actually the culture of an academic that is nested inside the middle class, which in turn is nested inside the American culture, which is then nested within the broader U.S. culture.

## **Slide #6**

**Slide Title:** Slide 6

### 9 CONSUMERS' CULTURE & Meaning Transfer

#### Core Western Values

- Individualism
- Freedom
- Merit, Competitiveness, Accomplishment
- Materialism

- Change and Progress
- Equality of Opportunity

*[Image depicting 5 identically dressed men and one standing out standing on his head, dressed casually]*

*[Image of front cover for CONSUMER BEHAVIOR] Human Pursuit of Happiness in the World of Goods MYCBBOOK.COM © Open Mentis 2013*

**Audio:**

As part of our socialization, we learn various cultural values, which once again, they are the foundations of our culture and they represent society's ideas about what is desirable in life. In order for consumer researchers to understand why people in a society act the way that they do, they really need to know what the core values of that society are. This slide shows the six core American values of the many more possible American values we could have listed here.

You are all familiar with these values and in fact, their titles are pretty self-explanatory, so we don't need to define and explain each one of them any further.

**Slide #7**

**Slide Title:** Slide 7

9 CONSUMERS' CULTURE & Meaning Transfer

Core Eastern Values

- Collective Identity
- Inner Harmony
- Respect for Tradition
- Respect for Hierarchy
- Humanism

*[Image of a geisha outfit]*

*[Image of front cover for CONSUMER BEHAVIOR] Human Pursuit of Happiness in the World of Goods MYCBBOOK.COM © Open Mentis 2013*

**Audio:**

The core American values on the previous slide are representative of the cultural values of many other Western countries such as Canada and western European countries. In contrast, many of the core cultural values of Eastern and Latin American countries differ quite sharply from those of western societies. This slide presents some of the Eastern values that are noticeably different from those on the previous slide.

For example, Eastern societies tend to value harmony with others and inner peace rather than striving for material success and individual triumph at the expense of others. Again, you are all pretty familiar with these values and their titles are relatively self-explanatory. So, we don't have to discuss them any further.

## Slide #8

**Slide Title:** Slide 8

### 9 CONSUMERS' CULTURE & Meaning Transfer

Universal Cultural Value Dimensions  
(Hofstede's FIVE)

- Individualism vs. Collectivism
- Power Distance
- Uncertainty Avoidance
- Masculinity vs. Femininity
- High Context vs. Low Context

*[Image of a man whose eyes are covered with a black bandage about to cut it off with scissors]*

*[Image of someone saying 'Be Quiet' with their finger to their mouth]*

*[Image of front cover for CONSUMER BEHAVIOR]* Human Pursuit of Happiness in the World of Goods MYCBOOK.COM © Open Mentis 2013

#### **Audio:**

What we will discuss in greater detail is Hofstede's value dimensions. Hofstede is a Dutch cultural anthropologist who analyzed cultural values of 50 different countries and identified five dimensions in which societies tend to differ. Let's talk about each of Hofstede's five in greater detail.

First, individualism versus collectivism. This cultural value dimension refers to whether a society values the well-being of an individual. This is known as individualism and is valued by Western societies. Or if it values the well-being of the group as a whole more than the well-being of the individual. This is known as collectivism and is valued by Eastern societies.

The principal marketing application here is the individualistic appeals such as stand out from other, which is quite common in Western advertising, is quite unsuitable for collectivist societies such as Asian countries or when targeting Asian or Hispanic consumers in the United States.

Next, let's talk about power distance. This refers to the extent to which the less powerful members of a society accept the authority of those with greater power. This value can also influence our consumption behaviors. For example, if you are promoting a product in Egypt or Malaysia – two countries with very large power distances, then you would have to appeal to the head of the household who makes all of the decisions. In contrast, in countries like the U.S., you would have to appeal either to the whole family or to the specific member of the family for whom the product is intended for.

Next, we are going to talk about uncertainty avoidance. This refers to the extent to which people in a society feel threatened by ambiguous situations and try to avoid them. For example, northern Europeans generally have very low tolerance for uncertainty as compared to people in Mediterranean nations. So, consumers from northern Europe are less likely to buy products with

uncertain benefits, such as many new products or they are unlikely to buy products or services from unfamiliar service providers.

Next, let's talk about masculinity versus femininity. Some societies value things such as money, success, power and qualities such as assertiveness. These are considered to be masculine traits. Consequently, these cultures are called masculine whereas cultures that value things like harmony, piece of mind, caring for others and quality of life are called feminine cultures.

Accordingly, consumers in feminine cultures tend to reject environmentally unfriendly products because their benefits are primarily materialistic in nature and they harm the environment. In contrast, consumers in masculine cultures tend to buy products that reflect their material success. Therefore, a new car might be positioned as a high power engine in masculine cultures whereas in feminine cultures marketers might instead emphasize the car's aesthetic features and the peaceful and harmonious experience of driving it.

Finally, let's talk about high versus low context cultures. In high context cultures such as most Asian societies, to understand something you really need to know the context. Behind everything there are layers of meaning which are not immediately apparent to outsiders. In contrast, in low context cultures such as Western societies, things tend to be more self-explanatory and people are more explicit in their communications.

So, advertisers in high context cultures tend to make greater use of indirect symbolic messages and avoid direct comparisons with competitors. In contrast, low context cultures such as the U.S. tend to use more simple and more direct and explicit communications.

## **Slide #9**

**Slide Title:** Slide 9

9 CONSUMERS' CULTURE & Meaning Transfer

Marketing Blunders:

*[Image comparing two version of an ad portraying a woman, a French version half-naked and a Middle-Eastern version fully dressed]*

- Lost in Translation
- Written Scripts
- Colors
- Numbers and Other symbols
- Standards of Nudity and Taboo Topics
- Product Consumption Differences *[Image of people drinking something red]*

*[Image of front cover for CONSUMER BEHAVIOR]* Human Pursuit of Happiness in the World of Goods MYCBOOK.COM © Open Mentis 2013

**Audio:**

Next, we are going to discuss marketing blunders. We have a lot to discuss on this slide so please take good notes. We have already discussed several applications for marketing in general and consumer behavior in particular. This section provides a more extensive account of how culture and its various elements impact consumer behavior and marketing practice.

The most obvious connection is that most rituals and customs entail the consumption of products or services. Many holidays are customs and they entail very elaborate ritualistic activities. For example, Christmas and Valentine's Day induce the sale of greeting cards, flowers, candy, stuffed animals and wine and perfumes.

Likewise, in Israel, Passover is celebrated by nearly every household and it involves using many different products such as candles, ritualistic wine cups, eating carpas, which is a vegetable, and many other ritualistic things.

In order to know what kinds of products and services are needed, you have to familiar with the particular rituals or customers of the society where you sell your products. For example, if your business supplies products for Chinese weddings, you have to know what the Chinese wedding ritual entails.

The packaging and presentation of goods intended for use in rituals has to be exactly as specified by the respective cultural ritual. For example, if you want to serve beer on Saint Patrick's Day, you have to know how to make the beer green.

This slide essentially presents some of the key mistakes that marketers have made in the past due to their failure to study the local culture at an adequate level. Let's talk about each of the marketing blunders listed here with specific examples.

First, lost in translation. Marketing mistakes due to differences in language come in two different forms. The first is the brand acquires some undesired meaning in a foreign language. For example, Coca-Cola's Fresca is Mexican slang for lesbian. Ford's truck model Fiera translated into Spanish as "Ugly, old woman" and GM's Nova translated to "It doesn't go."

Second, when translated, a message loses its original meaning. For example, in Spanish, Hertz's tagline "Puts you in the driving seat" became that Hertz makes you a chauffeur and in Chinese KFC's "Finger licking good" became "Eat your fingers off." In addition, sometimes taglines are translated wrongly or just very poorly without understanding the direct translation by marketers.

For example, Carlsberg is a beer and its tagline, "Probably the best beer in the world" was translated in Greek as "Maybe the best beer in the world." To avoid such mistakes, marketers should use back translation and have a foreign translation translated back into the original language by a different translator to ensure that messages have the desired meaning in the foreign language.

The next marketing blunder we are going to discuss is written scripts. Another aspect of language is how it is written and how it is read. For example, Arabic is read from right to left. So, any before and after ads that are translated into Arabic should have the corresponding images reversed as well.

Furthermore, Arabic magazines are read from back to front. So, advertising have to be very careful where the next page is placed for ads that have the text on one page and the accompanying visuals on the following page.

Next, colors. Color connotations also differ by culture. For example, in Brazil the color purple signifies death whereas in most Western societies it is black. In Hong Kong, Japan and India, it is the color white. In Mexico and Thailand, it is the color yellow and in Singapore, it is the color green.

Therefore, international marketers should consult local culture guides as to the appropriate colors for specific uses and specific occasions. For example, wearing a yellow suit or even a yellow tie to a business meeting in Japan could be quite damaging and potentially offensive because the color yellow in clothing is reserved for royalty. Similarly, wearing a white carnation to a business meeting in China could also be bad news because in China and in many other Pacific countries, white carnations symbolize death.

Numbers and other symbols also tend to have specific symbolic meanings that differ across cultures. For example, in the U.S. and India, the number 13 is considered to be unlucky. In Japan, it is the number 4. So, if you are selling products to Japan, you should never package them in packs of 4. Other symbols with contrasting meanings include elves which signify wisdom in Greece and the U.S., but are considered to be bad luck in India and snakes, which symbolize wisdom in Korea, whereas in most other countries, they symbolize danger.

Next, we are going to talk about standards of nudity and other taboo topics. The acceptance of nudity varies widely across cultures. In Europe and Australia, nudity in the public media is much more accepted than it is in the U.S., which is in turn far more accepting of promiscuity than Eastern countries such as India, China and Thailand. The least accepting tend to be the Islamic countries such as Saudi Arabia.

So, perfume, lingerie and soap ads often depict scantily clad women in Europe and when the same ads are adapted for Middle Eastern countries, the models have to be more fully dressed as shown in the ad on the top right of this slide. Furthermore, sex and personal hygiene products are discussed quite freely in Europe and in the U.S. whereas these are a major taboo in most of Asia.

Therefore, you could not advertise contraceptives, for example, in China or Thailand until very late at night when it will be past the bedtime of most children and similarly, magazines for Viagra, which are also very common in U.S. could not be run in these countries at all.

Finally, let's talk about some product consumption differences. How people consume products also differs widely across cultures. Food consumption obviously differs as we discussed at the beginning of this presentation. Another example is that France recently banned burkas. Muslim women who are obligated by their cultural and religious customs to wear a burka will now receive a fine for doing so in France.

And finally, the consumption of alcohol also differs quite widely across cultures. In Japan, for example, typically male employees often go out drinking with their bosses and this is considered quite customary. It is in fact an insult to turn down a drink and often time they all

just get drunk together.

**Slide #10**

**Slide Title:** Slide 10

9 CONSUMERS' CULTURE & Meaning Transfer

Cultural Ethnocentrism

The Belief in the Superiority of One's own Culture

Measuring GENERAL Ethnocentrism

*[Image of TABLE 9.4 A SCALE TO MEASURE GENERAL ETHNOCENTRISM]*

*[Image of front cover for CONSUMER BEHAVIOR]* Human Pursuit of Happiness in the World of Goods MYCBOOK.COM © Open Mentis 2013

**Audio:**

Many people believe that their culture is superior to all others. This is called ethnocentrism. However, most people who travel around the world and meet people from different cultures tend to be a lot more cosmopolitan in their outlook and appreciation of other cultures. This slide shows a scale that we can use to measure general ethnocentrism.

The consumer behavior that is most affected by ethnocentrism is the purchase or lack thereof of products of foreign origin. We refer to this behavior as consumer ethnocentrism and it refers to the tendency to view the purchase of foreign products as unpatriotic. This slide also lists a scale that you can use to measure general ethnocentrism.

**Slide #11**

**Slide Title:** Slide 11

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**Audio:**

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