

# INTRO TO CULTURE

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# A LOOK AHEAD...

- What's culture?
- What's it made of?
- How does it change over time?
- What happens when two cultures go head to head?
- How do cultures spread?

# WHAT IS CULTURE?



- Several elements: language, religion, food, clothing, gender roles, occupations, interactions with people, etc.
- **Paul Vidal de la Blache**: cultural geographer called culture “the ways of life” that people develop over time which differentiate them from other groups of people, believed in possibilism

# THE CULTURAL ICEBERG

## OBSERVABLE (10%)



Food  
Dress Literature  
Language Dance  
Art Holidays Music  
Holidays/Festivals

**CONCEPTS OF:**  
Justice/Fairness Self  
Time  
Past and Future Roles  
related to Age, Gender,  
Class, Family, etc.

**NOTIONS OF:**  
Manners/Courtesy  
Friendship Leadership  
Modesty Beauty  
Cleanliness

**COMMUNICATION STYLE/RULES:**  
Body Language Eye Contact  
Personal Space Tone of Voice  
Displaying of Emotion  
Conversational Patterns

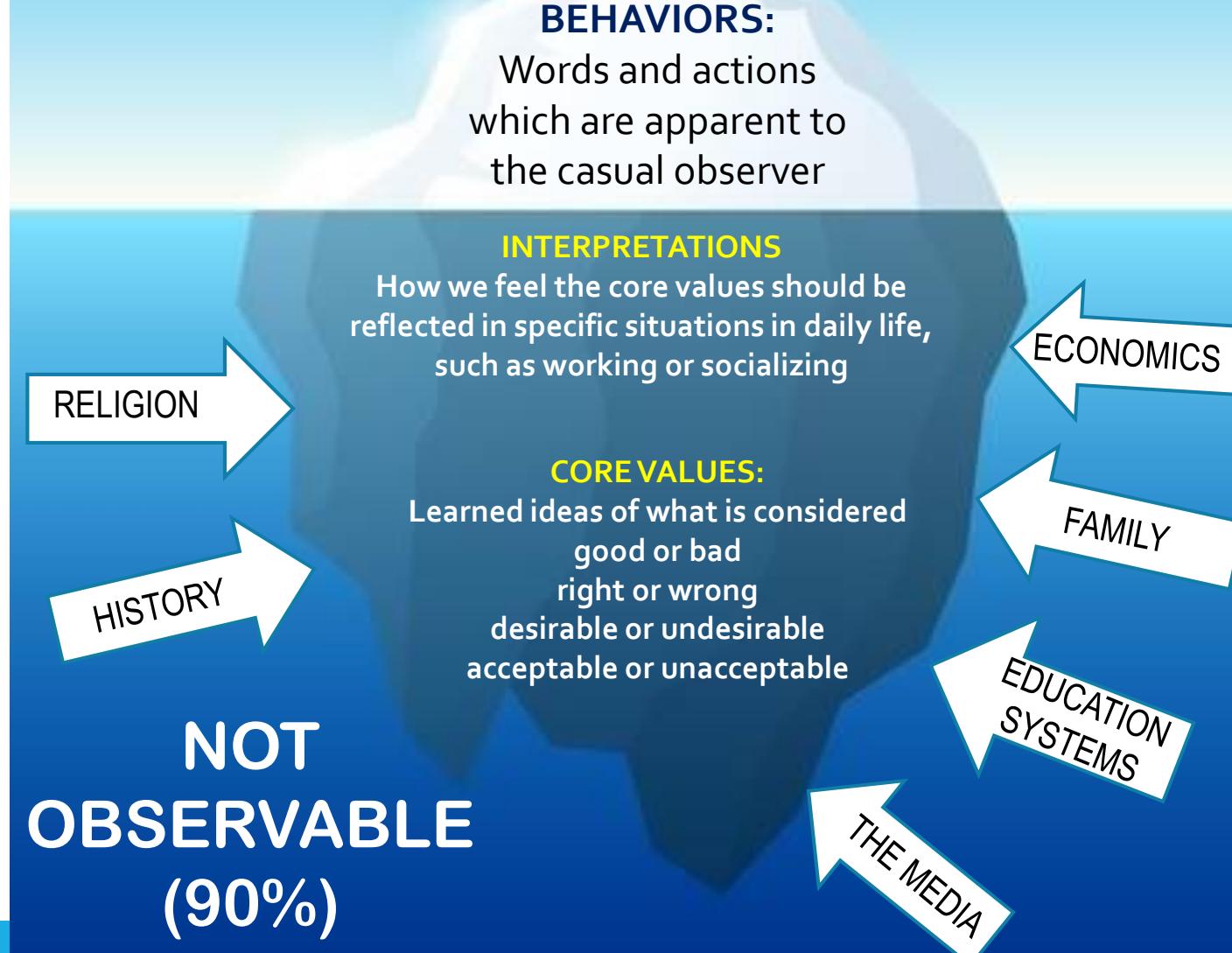
**APPROACHES TO:**  
Religion Courtship Marriage  
Raising Children  
Decision-making  
Problem Solving

**ATTITUDES TOWARD:**  
Elders Children Rule  
Work Authority Sin  
Death  
Cooperation vs  
Competition

## NOT OBSERVABLE (90%)

# THE CULTURAL ICEBERG

## OBSERVABLE (10%)

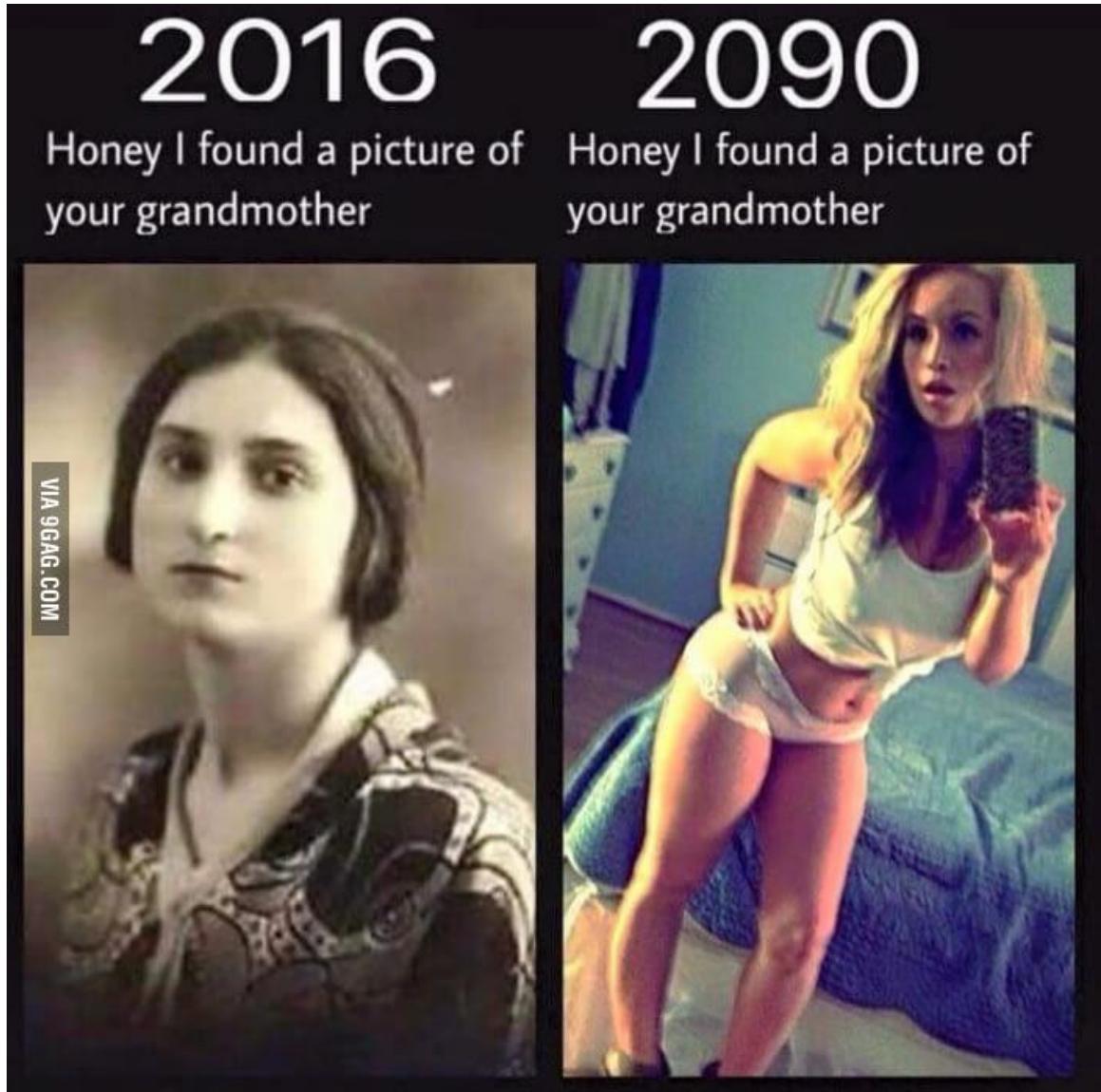


# WAYS OF OUR LIVES

- **Habit:** a regular tendency or practice
- **Custom:** a habit practiced by a group of people
- **Direct teaching:** parents first present their habit to their little cherub and discuss why it's important to do practice this habit
- **Indirect teaching:** parents don't say a word, but teach by example instead
- Customs transfer from one generation to the next and become part of that group's way of life

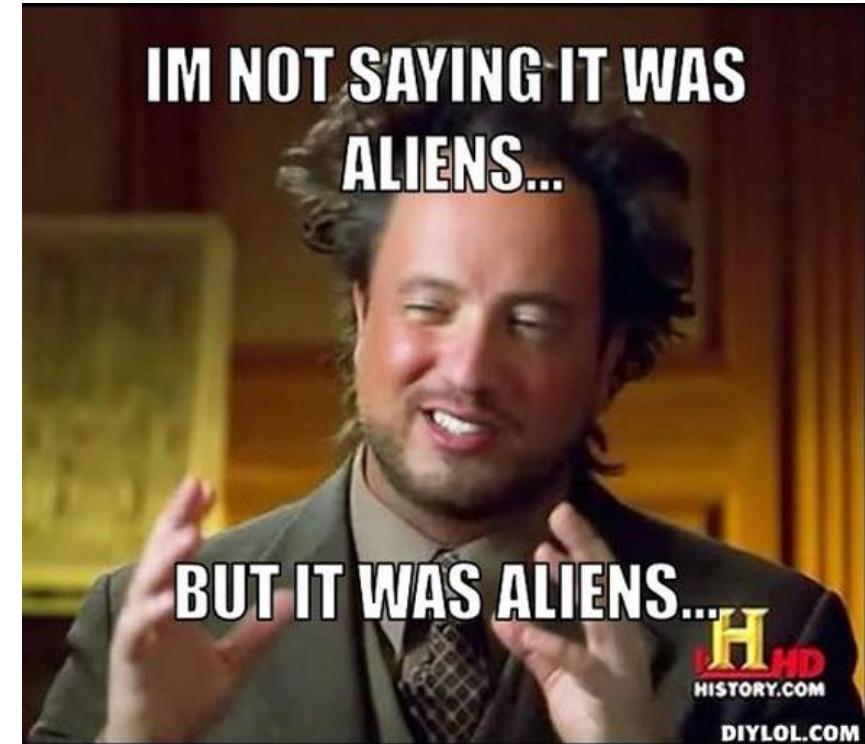
## A FEW OF OUR FAVORITE THINGS

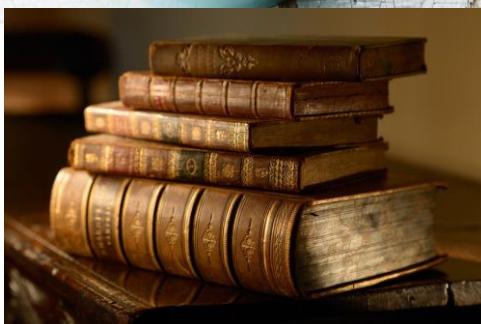
- **Material culture:** involves tangible items (artifacts)
- Artifacts can give clues about how people lived and died, but also help to raise questions
  - Tools indicate level of tech available at the time
  - Artwork sheds light on the aesthetic or religious values of a culture



# LIVING IN A (NON) MATERIAL WORLD

- Actions and opinions matter as much as tangible things
- Non-material culture: beliefs, values, preferences
- **Belief:** to trust or accept that something is true, even without proof

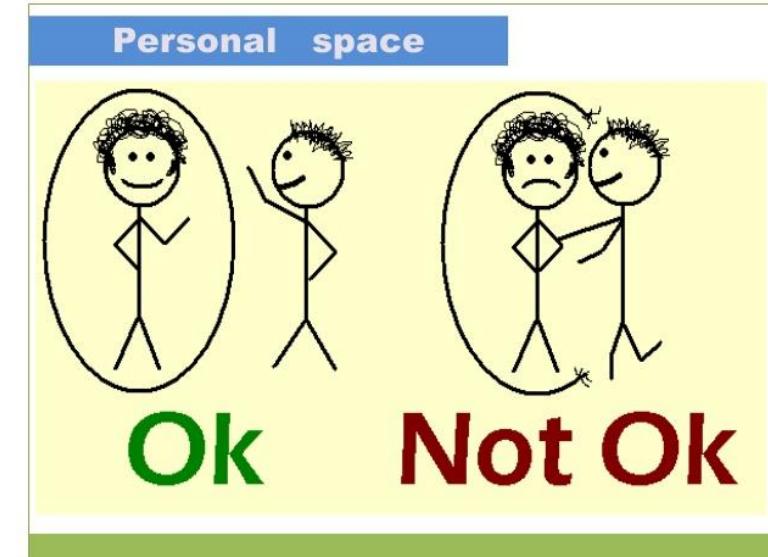




- **Value:** principles and standards of behavior believed to be important by a culture
  - Ex: charity, community, work ethic
  - Often come from religions which help establish good and bad behaviors
- **Preferences:** choices we make as individuals, values usually underlie

# CULTURE: TO LEARN OR NOT TO LEARN?

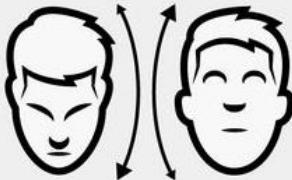
- Some things you inherit (ex: your nose)
- Some things you need to be taught (ex: religious values)
- Some things you learn on your own
- **Personal space** is a learned cultural difference
  - U.S.
    - Intimate personal space: 1 ft
    - Close personal distance: 1-4 ft
    - Social distance: 4 ft min
  - **Social cues**: verbal or nonverbal hints that guide human interactions



# BODY LANGUAGE AROUND THE WORLD

## HEAD

Nodding your head generally means agreement or approval.



But Bulgarians and Greeks, for example, are known for their unusual manner of saying yes and no: Nodding up and down signifies a negative.

## EYES



Good eye contact is expected in the West. Strong eye contact is most notable in Spain, Greece, and Arab countries.



Finns and Japanese are embarrassed by another's stare, and seek eye contact only at the beginning of a conversation.

## EARS

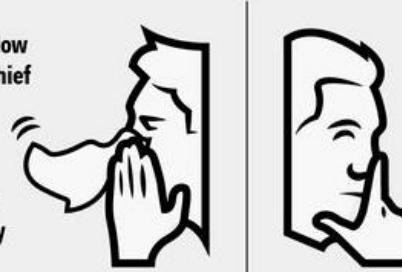
The Portuguese tug their earlobes to indicate tasty food, but in Italy this gesture has sexual connotations,



...and in Spain it means someone is not paying for their drinks.

## NOSE

A hearty nose blow into a handkerchief is typical in the West, while public nose blowing is frowned upon by the Japanese.



Tapping your nose means "confidential" in England, but "watch out" in Italy.

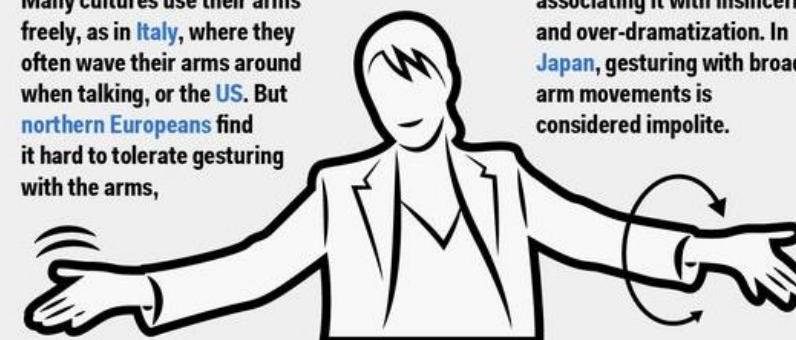
## LIPS

In some cultures – Filipino, Native American, Puerto Rican, and many Latin American cultures – people use their lips to point, instead of a finger. In the West, people often kiss when they meet or when they say goodbye; in many Asian countries, it is considered too intimate of an action to be displayed in public.



## ARMS

Many cultures use their arms freely, as in Italy, where they often wave their arms around when talking, or the US. But northern Europeans find it hard to tolerate gesturing with the arms,



associating it with insincerity and over-dramatization. In Japan, gesturing with broad arm movements is considered impolite.

## HANDS

The American "goodbye" wave can be interpreted as the signal for "no" in many parts of Europe and Latin America.



In Malaysia it is taboo to point with your index finger, but you can point with your thumb. "Thumbs up" is used in many cultures, none more so than Brazil however,



...where the signal is used everywhere. However, it's a rude sexual signal in some Islamic countries, Sardinia, and Greece, and can signify the number "1" in France.

## LEGS

Sitting crosslegged is common in North America and some European countries,



...but it's viewed as disrespectful to show the sole of your shoe to another person in Asia and the Middle East.

Source: "When Cultures Collide: Leading Across Cultures" by Richard Lewis and NACADA (<http://www.nacada.ksu.edu>)