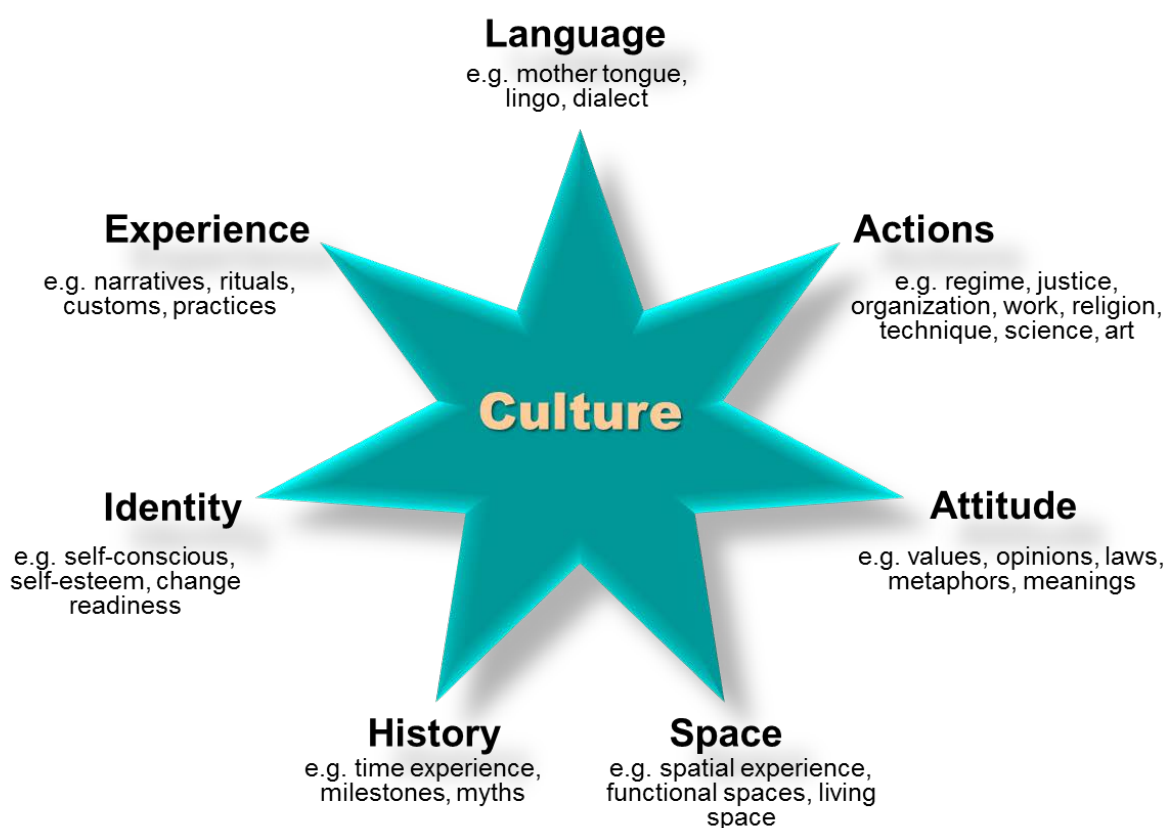


Cultural aspects

Culture is everything that people materially and idealistically create, do and use - things, systems, behavior and thinking. It becomes visible in social, organizational, family and similar communities as well as in the personality of individuals. Because of different cultures, individual types and hard to observe elements, the preoccupation with culture requires a lot of time, expenditure, patience and above all a structure for the description. This model offers substantial elements for the description of cultures. The conscious collection and transfer of cultural aspects facilitate the access to other cultures.

Cultural aspects consists of seven areas: Language, actions, attitude, space, history, identity and experiences.



- **Language** is a system of tokens, terms and rules that a group of people share. Everyone has several languages that are used in parallel, e.g. native language, foreign languages, lingos, dialects. The characteristics of a language provide indicators for cultural characteristics. An example is the Japanese token of thought (思い) that consists of a heart under a rice field, which links thinking to feeling.
- **Actions** are visible acts that are typical for a group of people. They can be found for example within the areas regime, law, work, religion and art. Thinking can be derived from actions. For example nature-related religions speak for a close relationship to the nature.
- **Attitude** includes elements that are often used synonymously with culture. This includes values, opinions, laws and meanings. They form the basis for mental models, which strongly affect the act subliminally. Thus a so-called high-context culture (e.g. Japan) requires a long-term integration of people into a social system, in order to be able to understand expressions that contain many assumptions (e.g. the reference to a person's birth place implies special, local convictions).

- **Space**
 describes handling of places, areas, distances and borders of coherent regions - geographical and abstract. This includes spatial experience, functional spaces and living spaces. Example of spatial experience is the distinction in private and in public space and the related behavior. The preference of the private area indicates a trend to larger distance from others. In functional spaces, e.g. an apartment, a variety of cultural characteristics are subsumed (e.g. allocation, size, and appropriate behavior). Accordingly culture is defined (e.g. handling of historical buildings).
- **History**
 describes the usage of aspects of time, like time experience, milestones and myths. Time experience is well expressed in the saying „the way is the goal “. This saying does not focus on target achievement, but the continuous, ‚infinite‘ occupation. For cultures that practice this thinking, concrete, exactly scheduled goals are not so important.
- **Identity**
 is the amount of metaprograms that characterize a group of people. This includes for example self-confidence, self-esteem and change readiness. Self-confidence and self-esteem describe for example impression, evaluation and classification of the own self. This results, depending upon culture, in different approaches of group work and discussion styles.
- **Experience**
 is the sum of undergone incidents as well as the sum of the experiences of a group of people. These are expressed in narratives, rituals, customs and practices. Experiences are seldom pronounced, form a common state of knowledge in the context of a lifestyle and can only be determined with difficulty by outsiders. Examples are the Chinese proverbs, the so-called Chengyus, which consist of four signs (e.g. old man loses horse) and a long explanation with a moral of the story (in this case: Blessing in disguise).