



ECSO4002: Who Are We?: Culture and Identity

Theme 4: Social Norms and Values

Learning Review

What did you cover in Theme 3?

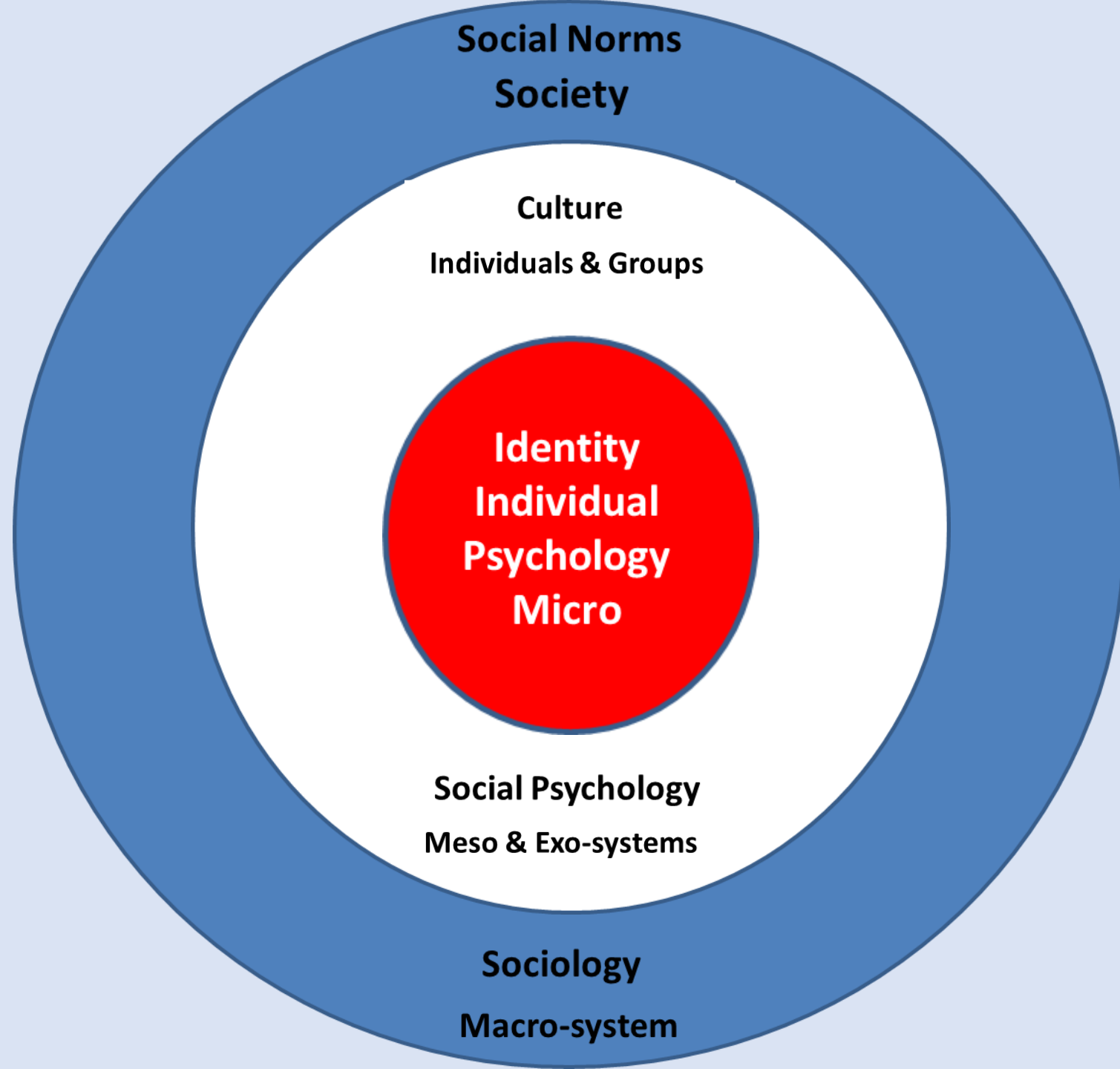


Social Norms
& Values

Culture



Identity



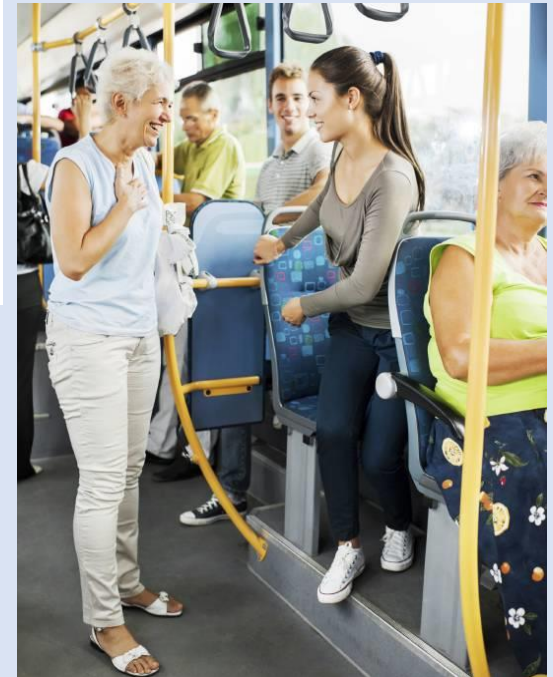
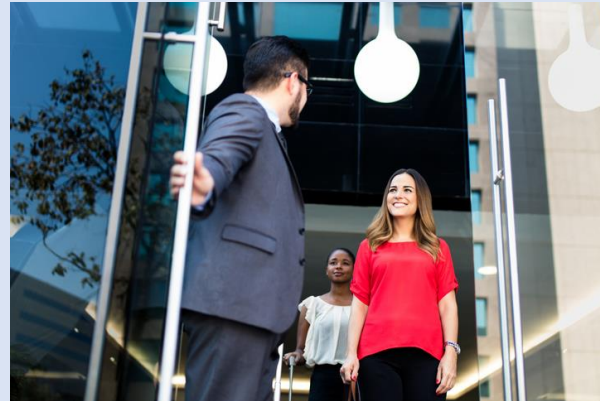
What are Social Norms and Values?

In small groups revisit your notes from Theme 1 where we initially discussed the concept of social norms and values.

*What ideas and concepts did you discuss?
Feedback to your Tutor.*

What do you think Social Norms are?

Can you think of some examples?

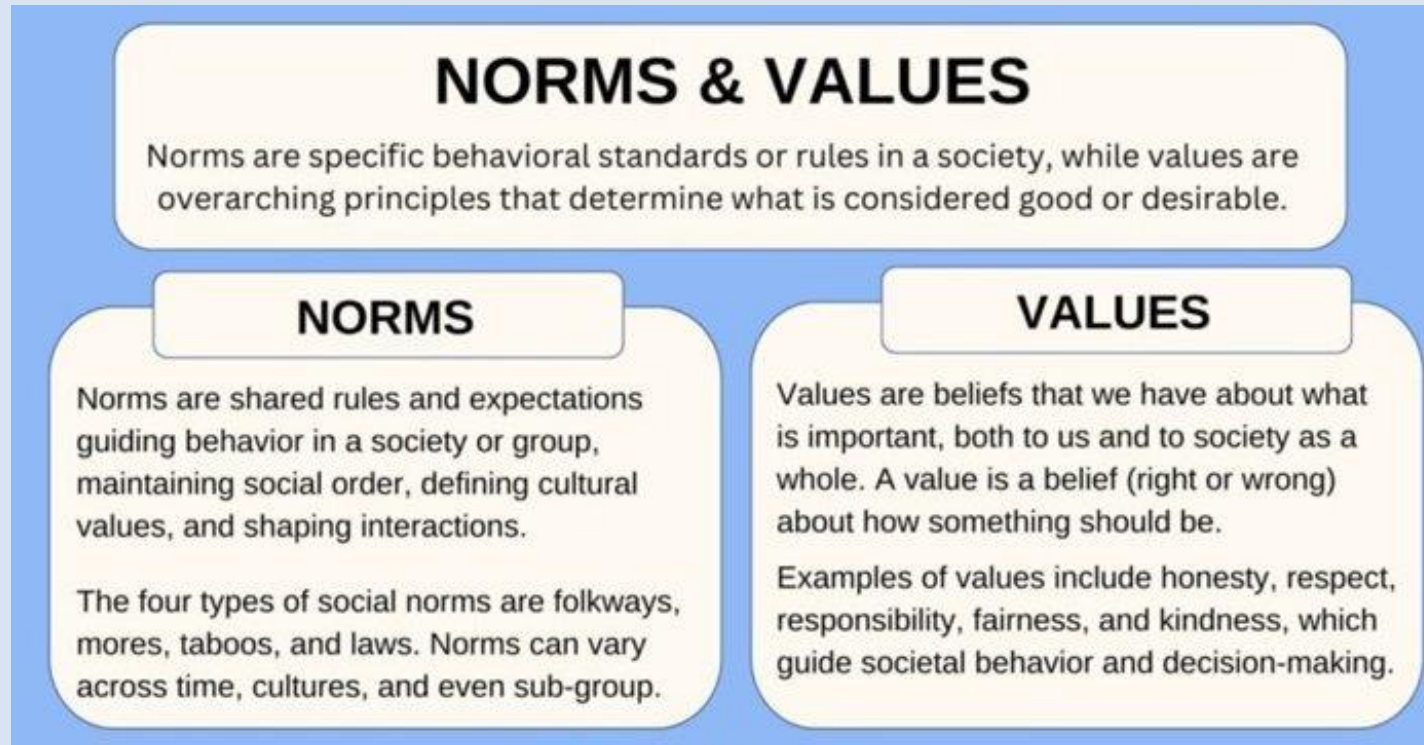


Are Social Norms the same in every culture?

Definition of Social Norms

‘social norms are seen as central to the production of social order or social coordination, research on norms has been focused on the functions they perform’

(Bicchieri *et al* 2018)



Types of Social Norms

Folkways or social conventions

- ❖ Social conventions are the most common type of social norms. They are behaviours that we display or experience in everyday life.
- ❖ Social conventions can govern behaviours such as what time we eat, how we dress, our manners. These behaviours could be out of traditions, routine or customs.
- ❖ According to Gillin & Gillin (1948) Folkways are behaviour patterns of everyday life which generally arise unconsciously in a group.
- ❖ This type of social norms regulate many day-to-day aspect of our lives. Such as how we conduct ourselves socially. But we are often not aware they exist until one or more are broken.

Types of Social Norms

Folkways or social conventions

- ❖ It is often easier to recognise folkways when they are broken.
- ❖ When they are broken, some in society may see it as eccentric behaviour.
- ❖ Though others may label the individual as "deviant"
- ❖ Have a look at the following video clips, can you see any social conventions being broken?
- ❖ ***N.B. because these examples break social conventions some people may be offended by some of the images***

Please use the Guided study sheet to write down your thoughts.

Tipi Valley



Roadkill Chef



The Naked Rambler



What are your thoughts on the videos?

What social conventions did you notice were broken?

Types of Social Norms

Folkways or social conventions

- ❖ Social conventions are informal social norms that are 'acquired' by individuals.
- ❖ They are formed through social interactions.
- ❖ They can be passed on from generation to generation by the process of socialisation.
- ❖ Attitudes towards people who break social conventions are inconsistent, it can depend on the person who is witnessing the behaviour and context. Why do you think this is?
- ❖ Sanctions for breaking social conventions are informal and inconsistent.

Types of Social Norms

Social Mores, moral and ethical codes

- ❖ According to Gillin and Gillin (1948) Social Mores are those customs and group routines which are thought by the members of society to be necessary to the group's continued existence
- ❖ Crawford & Novak argue that they are 'more serious than some social conventions however they are still often 'informal'
- ❖ They state that social mores can 'prohibit murder or the enactment of behaviours that harm other people in other ways'

(Crawford & Novak, 2018, p.292)

Types of Social Norms

Social Mores, moral and ethical codes

- ❖ The American Psychological Association state that social mores are 'customs and codes of behaviour established by a social group that are not necessarily supported by legal sanctions but that may be as binding as laws' (American Psychological Association, 2018)
- ❖ Their violation can be perceived as a serious threat to social order.

It is generally thought that people have to obey social mores in order to be part of a society . (Forsyth, 1990)

- ❖ Individuals are often punished if they fail to conform to the mores of the society.
- ❖ This punishment can be formal and informal but it can be brutal

**We will now watch a video of the type of punishment individuals may face.
Please be aware that some of the content described could be upsetting.**

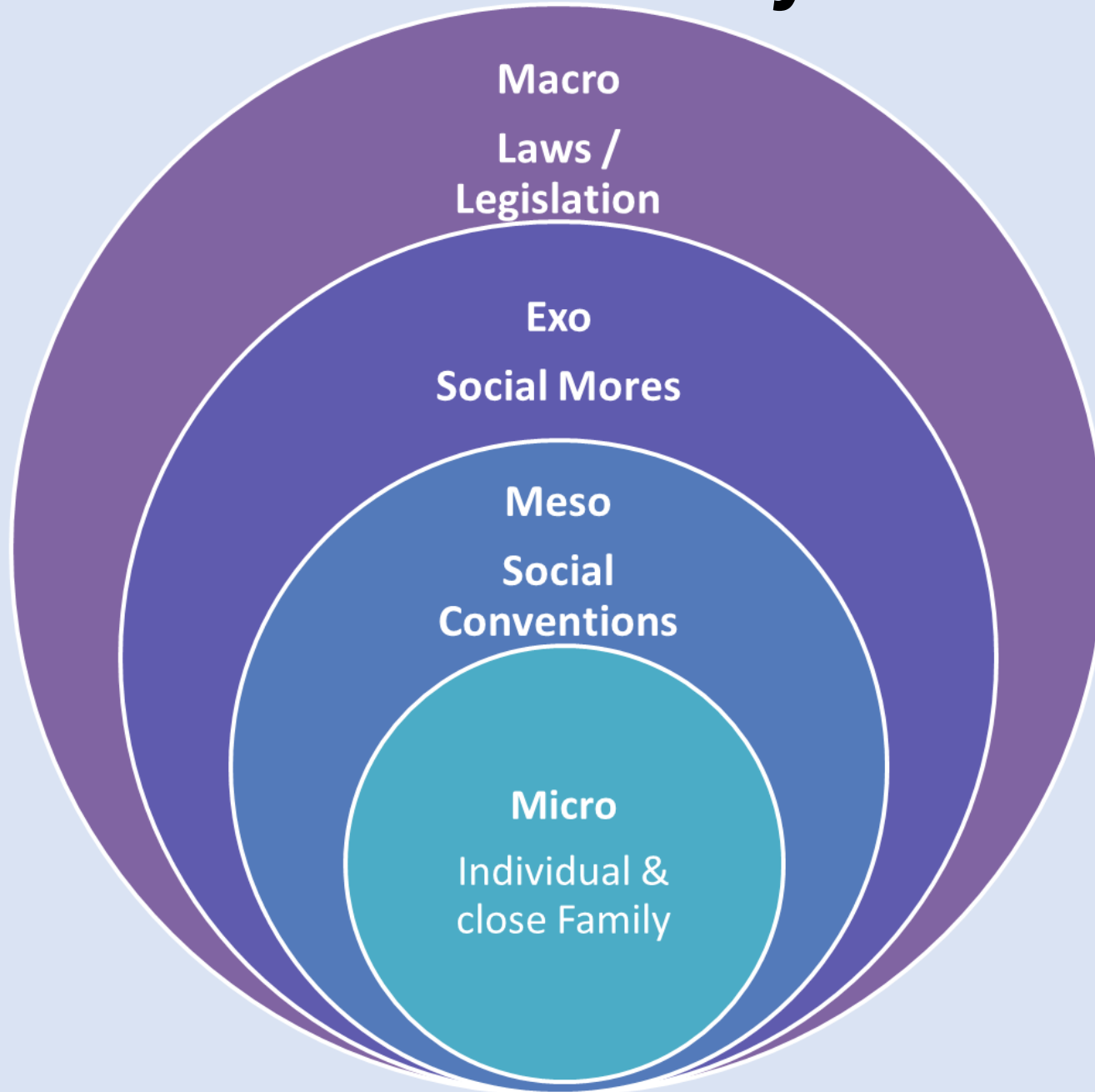


Types of Social Norms

Laws / Legislation / Legal Codes

- ❖ These are always, by their nature, formal social norms
- ❖ They are 'codified and enforced by the state through the institution of criminal justice' (Crawford & Novak, 2018, p.292)
- ❖ They usually but not always conform to social mores
- ❖ Crawford and Novak give the examples that the law against murder conforms to most people's own social mores but many individuals do not see speeding laws as having the same moral imperative (Crawford & Novak, 2018, p.292)

Bronfenbrenner's Theory & Social Norms



Functions of social norms

From what we have discussed thus far, social norms can be seen to serve the following functions for society;

- ❖ **Self-control:** social norms give individuals a guide as to what they should or shouldn't do
- ❖ **Controlling group behaviour:** if enough individuals conform to social norms then societal behaviour is also controlled
- ❖ **Systemising behaviour:** social norms provide a system which people can follow, i.e. a person does not have to think about every action they take

Characteristics of norms

Descriptive Norms

- ❖ Descriptive norms are concerned with an individual's interaction with a group
- ❖ They develop from watching the actions of other group members in certain situations.
- ❖ The more that target group members behave similarly in a given situation, the more the observer will tend to view their behaviour as appropriate.
- ❖ When individual group members believe that the group supports a certain behaviour, they are more likely to exhibit this behaviour themselves.

Characteristics of norms

Injunctive Norms

- ❖ Injunctive norms refer to what individuals feel is “right” based on morals or beliefs.
- ❖ These morals and beliefs are acquired by socialisation.
- ❖ They are specific guidelines about behaviour in certain situations (i.e. reciprocity norms – that is the norm that we should repay a favour that another does for us) (Peiyu Pai & Hsien-Tung Tsai, 2016)
- ❖ They develop through normative influence or when group members conform to receive social approval.
- ❖ Rather than describing appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, injunctive norms prescribe it.

Characteristics of norms

Subjective Norms

- ❖ Subjective norms are group members' perceptions about what important and influential individuals (e.g., leaders) think about a certain behaviour. (*What would Jesus Do?*)
- ❖ Thus, they are subjective in the sense that there are variations between individuals as to who is considered important.
- ❖ The theory of reasoned action suggests that the main influence on individual intentions is subjective norms.
- ❖ This may be one reason it is common practice for people to consult others before making decisions.

References

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