

Many they want?  
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Many of us live on the hyphen of Different cultures.

This statement by Richard Rodriguez is true from many people in the world today. But what factors contribute the identification with culture and a nation? The various factors that define a culture are the way people see a cultures attitude, family values, religion in the family, and the origin of your family. At the present time the people of the world are very stereotypical, this is one of the many ways to misinterpret people of a different culture.

To best understand a culture you should take the time to absorb their way of life to really appreciate their culture. The first factor, which contributes to the identification with a culture and a nation, is a culture attitude towards outsiders. In *Canadians: What do they want?* written by Margaret Atwood, it tells of Americans attitude toward the Canadians as a lesser person and their need to be liked by others. The Canadians are looked at as inferior because after WW II, American business owners went into Canada and took over most of their businesses. Some Canadians hate Americans for this because they have taken their own identity away from Canada.

In *The Arab World* by Edward Hall, he uses hidden dimensions and proxemic patterns to show how the Arab culture presents itself. I moved my body in such a way as to communicate annoyance. Strangely enough, instead of moving away, my actions seemed only to encourage him, because he moved even closer.(p. 201) This statement shows how an Arab man makes an American man nervous by getting to close.

But what is too close? In the Arab culture closeness is a sign of respect, but in American culture closeness is only for people who are affectionate.

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Another example of attitudes in culture is in the story *Some Reflections on American Manners* by Alexis de Tocqueville. Tocqueville argues that American have no code of behavior and also has too much mobility in their actions. Through his essay Tocqueville uses the example that America has turned into an Individualistic Society and have destroyed the Aristocratic way of life with the new idea of democracy. The attitude of an insider of a culture is seen differently than what the visitors of that culture see.

This view from a different person brings stereotypes about; this is the wrong way to start a relationship with a culture or a person. Secondly, family values also contribute to the identity of a culture and a nation. The essay *The Way to Rainy Mountain* written by N.

Scott Momaday, the writer want to be with his grandmother. She is a way to his past and his roots. The grandmother was a teacher to her grandson. My grandmother had a reverence for the sun, a holy regard that now is all but gone out of mankind. There was a wariness in her, and an ancient awe. The writer had a respect and thought that his grandmother was the only way back to his roots. The writers view of family is very strong because he uses a myth, which most Native Americans use to tells stories and teach their young of their past. Maxine Hong Kingston wrote an essay called *The Woman Warrior* which deals with the Chinese culture, and their view of woman having little significance to that of the men.

During the story she writes of the of her going to school and it only being good for her future husbands, and not her own.(p. 191) This view of family

values by Kingston is that of a male dominated society that woman will never have any say.

Another example of family values is in my family. I have been taught to attend church every Sunday. When in the future I have my family I will instill this value into my family values. This has made me a better person. Many people know that I attend church regularly and have much respect for the Mormon religion because of it. Family values are very important in being able to identify with a culture and its people. Continuing on to the next contributing factor in identification with a culture or nation is religion.

In most cultures in the world growing up in the church you are pressured into being saved by Jesus. In *Salvation* written by Langston Hughes he writes of a young black man, which is pressured into lying about being saved. This young man is a casualty of religion in the world: he is pressured by family values as well as religion by lying. Many cultures in the world today have pressured their children into their religion and not giving them the choice to choose what they think is right. In my family religion was pushed at a very early age. I live in an area that has little to no Mormons in the school system; this gives me a sense of being a minority. These other kids in the schools developed stereotypes of me because I was not of the majority religions of the school. Religion is an important part of most cultures, but cultures have pushed religion every since time has began and will continue too till the world ends.

Lastly, the origin of your family is also a contributing factor in identifying a culture or a nation. In *The woman Warrior* Kingston uses the example of

being of Chinese and America decent. Being of mixed origin can mix emotion for a child growing up into a certain culture.

The writer has grown up in the Chinese culture but also has the American society putting pressure on her to go out and get an education as well as a job. 4In the Chinese culture a woman place is in the home, so her family looks her down upon her. In *The Myth of the Latin Woman* Judith Cofer tells of a young woman who has the pressure of her family and her friends at the same time, making her emotions mixed.

She is brought up to be a proper *senorita* (p. 177) but to her Anglo friends at school and her neighbors she is seen as too mature and flashy. Yet I often felt humiliated when I appeared at an American friends party wearing a dress more suitable to a semiformal(p. 178) This statement shows how different culture see each others dress as a sign of identity.

In the Latin culture woman wear little clothing and wear flashy colors, this is only cause of the heat. The Americans see this as a sign of maturity in their culture and look down on women who dress like this in everyday life. The woman in the story was confused, she couldnt decide whether to stay with her own family values or find a new identity with her friends. Another example of trying to identify with a culture is being born in one culture but living in another. Many parents today move jobs, so when their child is growing up in a neighborhood where they are the majority they can identify with them more easily. But when they move into a new neighborhood where they are the minority, they are usually picked on and have lower self-

esteems. Trying to identify with a culture is a hard task to do for the children of the world today.

Trying to find an identity for a child is an important thing while growing up. In conclusion I believe that the factors that contribute to the identification of a culture are attitude, family values, religion, and the origin of your family. I was brought up not to stereotype; my parents put me in a school where there were diverse cultures.

I made many friends of different cultures and that has helped me to this day. Being able to identify with a culture better helps you to understand why and how they do things differently than you do. Most people are afraid to learn something new but when learning a new culture and not having a bias against it makes other cultures more interesting. I believe having more influence from many cultures make you a better person because you have the view of many, not just a few, or just one.