SOCIAL CLASS AND CULTURE

I. Social Class

A. Social class refers to stratification - society differentiates roles and assigns them different status. A class is an aggregate of people of approximately equally judged social prestige.

B. Social class is often measured using indices based on occupation, income, education.

C. There are differences in world view across classes that affect marketing analyses:
   1. Time orientation - here and now vs. future-oriented
   2. Concrete vs. abstract thinking; functional vs. expressive
   3. Sense of control
   4. View of "ideal" self, masculinity/femininity
   5. Focus on family, local vs. broader circle

D. Implications
   1. Class vs. income
      a. Class alone is most useful for moderate to low expense products with status or symbolic implications (e.g., wines, furniture - expressive vs. functional, clothing, leisure activities)
      b. Income alone works fine for products that require large expenditures but are not (usually) status symbols (e.g., washing machines)
      c. Both class and income needed for expensive, symbolic items (e.g., cars, homes)
   2. Store choice - store image can be class-related (e.g., "upscale" stores; making inferences based upon the consumer's image of the 'typical' customer)
   3. Advertising - tone and setting, media preferences (print vs. TV)

II. Culture

A. Culture refers to a set of learned beliefs, values, attitudes, and behavior that are shared by a society and are transmitted from one generation to another. We often take the influence of culture for granted because it is so pervasive.

B. Emerging Values - Keeping up with value trends is important; if patterns of values and broad goals change, it can have major implications for new types of products, benefits (e.g., Lifestyle Monitor, Faith Popcorn); however, "trends" come and go, so this is an 'art' as much as a science. For example, fitness & wellness may be part of deeper values of personal achievement, self-esteem, which is reflected in issues from exercise to food to drinking habits. But – recently this trend has leveled off and there is more of a shift toward indulgence (the 'pleasure revenge')

III. Marketing to different cultures
A. Sensitivity to cultural differences is crucial - diversity of customers
1. Consumers choose products to meet needs; among factors giving rise to needs are views of the self, relationship to others, and rituals. These all differ across cultures.
2. Perceptions of products and benefits differ (e.g., foods, washing machines in Europe, P&G liquid detergents and dispensers)
3. Views of morality, ethics may differ (e.g., brand counterfeiting, Europe’s tougher views on privacy, local tastes for what is acceptable in ads, differences in treatment of ethnic groups)
4. Rituals and lifestyles differ across cultures - e.g., holidays, grooming, gift-giving and attachment to products, cooking, child-rearing (e.g., children in China – the little emperor syndrome)
5. Regulatory environments differ (e.g., Europe and the web)

B. Examples
1. McDonald’s in Japan
   a. Barriers of traditional diet, preparation
   b. Fujita tried to fit to Japanese culture, understood social changes
      i. Postwar generation, school lunches
      ii. Younger generation could break tradition more easily
      iii. Location of first store provided status, visibility
2. P&G - Pringles, Pantene
3. Dishwashers in Japan and the barriers to adoption
   a. Issues of kitchen size, type of food and ability to clean (rice)
   b. Psychological issues (guilt, what others will think)

C. How much one needs to adapt to local conditions is a major controversy. Some products (e.g., Coke) are marketed essentially the same way everywhere. Others, as we saw above, adapt to local conditions. What’s a poor manager to do?
1. Consider factors characterizing products
   a. The degree to which a product is culture-bound varies
      i. Products tend to be more culture-bound if foods (e.g., pizza in Japan, nonalcoholic beer in Mideast), used for personal care (e.g., cosmetics), used in home ‘rituals’ or governed by conventions (e.g., laundry, credit cards)
      ii. More industrial, high-tech products are likely to be less culture-bound
   b. High-end products may be more similar across cultures
   c. Fit between product’s distribution system and cultural norms can help its spread (e.g., Amway in Japan, Avon in China)
2. Segments - some argue that there are segments across countries that are very similar in wants and needs - e.g., teens, luxury and high status
3. Trends - increasing homogeneity with worldwide communications networks, Internet vs. recent trends toward nationalism, fractionalization, ethnic and religious fundamentalism (see the article for point 4)
4. Degree to which being “American” is part of appeal or lack of appeal
5. Issue is not whether to go global but how to tailor global marketing to each business; i.e., think globally, act locally in many cases (e.g., cosmetics, McDonalds in Serbia)

6. Use local sources of information on trends, tastes (e.g., high school girls in Japan)

IV. Subcultures

A. Subcultures are distinct groupings within a major culture which have significant common beliefs, attitudes, or experiences which differentiate them from other members of a culture. Marketers typically see subcultures first as a "market" whose differences one must appreciate; then segments within that market are identified. Understanding diversity is critical; diversity itself can be directly targeted.

B. African-American Consumers

1. Distinct social/cultural aspects (e.g., sense of community, tie to traditional institutions like church, emphasis on cues to success, more brand loyal, etc.)

2. Strategies, executions need to be sensitive to African-American consumers – verisimilitude is critical (Lafayette Jones quote (head of Segmented Marketing Services) - African-Americans are not just brown white people)
   a. Settings, people, language in ads
   b. Meaningful symbolism reflecting values, institutions
   c. Potential issue – ownership of businesses targeting African-American consumers (e.g., restaurant, Wiley's)

C. Hispanic Consumers

1. Family extremely important (e.g., tradeoff between convenience and benefit to family often favors family); households larger and younger; Hispanic heritage, language (some segments show indebtedness to advertisers who use Spanish, others are negative – depends upon degree of acculturation, goals regarding assimilation)

2. Example – Target and Sears – use of Spanish magazines, bilingual signs and clerks, store layout, product selection to appeal to Hispanic consumers

3. Cultural differences within Hispanic consumers - e.g., Cuban-Americans vs. Mexican-Americans vs. Puerto Ricans

D. Asian-Americans - rapidly growing, very disparate. Marketers appear to be having a hard time getting a handle on how to approach.