CULTURAL BACKGROUND & EVS

Materials/ Waste

*Describe how people in different communities are shaped/shape by the cultures of where we live and how does identity and individual agency are influenced by their cultural “norms?”*

Preliminary Research

Understanding of different mindsets and cultures when regarding materials, waste, recycling and climate change. Research over 5 countries/ 3 continents of the overall mindsets and behaviors when regarding these issues.

Choose 5 countries or 3 general areas (USA, Europe, Asia) and conduct research on their habits, mindsets through articles, policies and other online surveys

Project #1/ Social Experiment

Options

* Visual Survey
* Interview

**Interview 5 people regarding their:**

1. Use of household products
2. Daily Routines
3. Waste Removal
4. Shopping Habits
5. Recycling Habits
6. Laws/ Habits in home country

**Also ask about their:**

1. Background
2. Upbringing
3. Country of Origin

Use these ideas to tie together an idea whether culture and background may shape how these people may live, and do their daily routines.

Final Proposal: Cultural Identity & the Environment

Research Question/ Topic

*Describe how people in different communities are shaped/shape by the cultures of where we live and how does identity and individual agency are influenced by their cultural “norms?”*

1. To what extent are cultural identity and social expectations a factor in shaping our environmental value system?

Project Outline

To get a better understanding of how cultural identity and environmental value systems or behaviors have a symbiotic relationship. This project will combine research and understanding of different cultures and traditions in tandem with their daily routines and outlooks on the environment. Each individual has a different perspective when it comes to the environment and that usually can be a result of their environmental value system which is based of social and cultural background, , family and education. Through this project I want to explore how the position of the different scales of environmental value systems can be tied to cultural background.

Environmental Value System – a particular world view or paradigm which shapes the way and individual or group perceives, evaluates and acts upon environmental issues

Ecocentrism - Nature centered

Anthropocentrism – People centered

Technocentrism – Technology centered

By doing research regarding cultural background I can explore how environmental issues and how their EVS is shaped through their background and upbringings. I can explore this using a series of questions regarding their cultural background, where the grew up and also about their opinions regarding current environmental issues.

Resources

**Direct Survey** – I have decided to do a direct survey as it would be easier to ask further questions around my base questions and take notes regarding cultural background.

This would also allow me to have a wider range of people in the survey and a different range of groups

**Final Creative Piece** – Using my findings to create a creative piece of art/a vide with regards to the different value systems

Project Structure

Target Group Dynamics:

Age Group-

I have decided to do the age group 15-12 years, since environmental concerns and studies have been heightened over the last 5 years. These studies are now imposed in many high school programs and university classes. Therefore, I want to see whether those who are younger, that may have taken environmental classes are have been directly affected by climate change at a young age and how their mindsets differ to those who are older

15-25 years

3 Different Cultural Backgrounds

I have decided to use three different areas in the world as each of these continents have a mix of different cultural backgrounds, education systems and are affected by the environment in different ways. Therefore I think using three different cultures and places will result in a holistic result for my research question.

Asia

Europe

United States

Data Collection

For each age group I will survey 5 people, 1 from Asia, 2 Europe and the 1 U.S. 1 Middle East

I will use short answers to create a scientific write up including, charts and graphs to have a basic overall understanding of the project. I will use the longer answers to understand the overall mindsets and get a deeper understanding of the cultural identities of the different participants.

I will create a visual piece to express the relationship between the cultural identities and environmental value systems. Using primarily photographs and paint.

SAMPLE Qs

1. Use of products : How many beauty products do you use on a daily basis?
2. Daily Routines : Do you use cars, public transport or do you walk?

Explain your daily routine?

1. Waste Removal: Do you recycle?

Do you tend to buy items in plastic containers

1. Shopping Habits : How often do you shop for clothing/ food?
2. Recycling Habits : Do you recycle on a daily basis?

What do you recycle?

1. Laws/ Habits in home country

BACKGROUND

1. Age Group
2. Country of Origin
3. Where did you grow up?
4. Did you study environmental science in School?
5. Are you aware of current environmental events?

Environmental Value Systems XXXX

I will give scenarios of different environmental dilemmas and issues and give options for them to choose from. This will allow me to group them into a certain environmental value system

1. To help lower the amounts of pollution in your home town would you

A) stop using paper and only recycled paper to stop deforestation in your town.

B) encourage governments to create laws and regulations regarding forestation in your town and support the new changes

C) Technology will develop and we will find a way to clear pollution without changes our daily habits.

Final Research Piece

Experiment Write Up: Including results, processes, graphs & Charts

Creative Piece: Showing the interrelated relationship between EVS’s & Cultural Background

(Photography/ Paint/ Collage/Video)

Cultural Identities & Environmental Value Systems

Research Question

*Describe how people in different communities are shaped/shape by the cultures of where we live and how does identity and individual agency are influenced by their cultural “norms?”*

Hypothesis

I think that depending on where one grew up and their cultural background, they will have different routines, different viewpoints on recycling and the environment and most of all they will have different environmental value systems with different reasoning for their EVS.

Background Information

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Process

During this experiment I decided to interview people from different cultures and countries to see if their cultural upbringings affected their opinions when regarding the environment and saving the environment. In the beginning I had decided to interview 20+ people, however I ended up doing video interviews as when I discussed this project with my peers I realized they all already had very different opinions when regarding the environment. I also think that a video interview and not writing the survey would produce more realistic and intuitive responses to my questions. It also allowed for the chance for further explanations when regarding their opinions when regarding the environment.

I decided to interview 6 individuals, 1 from Egypt, 1 from America, 1 from America and England, 1 from Belgium and Shanghai and 1 from Thailand and 1 from Beijing. This allowed me to have the perspectives from a multitude of cultures and with different life experiences.

I asked a series of basic questions including: name, where they grew up, whether they had environmental classes in school. I went onto asking questions about their daily habits including:

1. How many beauty products do you use on a daily basis?
2. What is your morning routine?
3. Do you use cars, public transport or do you walk?
4. Do you recycle?
5. Do you tend to buy items in plastic or styrofoam boxes?
6. Do you eat meat?
7. How often do you buy food from the supermarket or do you eat elsewhere?
8. How often do you shop for food?
9. How often do you buy clothes?
10. Do you recycle on a daily basis?
11. What do you recycle?
12. What are the laws/habits of your country?
13. Do the habits of your home country affect your opinion of the environment now?
14. Explain the habits of your home country or town.
15. Do you consider yourself ecocentric, anthropocentric or technocentric?

Every individual had very different opinions when regarding their views on the environment which reflects perfectly the experiences that they had while growing up and the opinions of those surrounding them in their childhood. Every person interviewed ate meat so I decided not to include that in the interview videos.

Qualitative Data: Video

Quantitative Data

To explain the different viewpoints of the environment I decide to summarize and write out the opinions and responses I got from my video interview. \* This is a summary of the answers; full answers are shown through my qualitative data collected

**Subject 1: Lucas Salama**

Country of Origin: Egypt

Hometown: Cairo

Did you study Environmental Science in School? Yes in High school & in Middle School

Environmental Value System: All three

1. How many beauty products do you use on a daily basis? *Deodorant, Shampoo, Toothpaste, Perfume*
2. What is your morning routine? *Shower, Brush Teeth*
3. Do you use cars, public transport or do you walk? *Walk or Subway*
4. Do you recycle? *Yes, plastic bags from groceries stores*
5. Do you tend to buy items in plastic or styrofoam boxes? *Plastic containers*
6. Do you eat meat? *Yes*
7. How often do you buy food from the supermarket or do you eat elsewhere? *Supermarket*
8. How often do you shop for food? *Once a week*
9. How often do you buy clothes? *Once a week*
10. Do you recycle on a daily basis? *No*
11. What do you recycle? *Metals, Plastics, Cardboard & Trash*
12. What are the laws/habits of your country? *There’s not much active involvement of people recycling, they are trying to clean up the streets but there are too many people*
13. Do the habits of your home country affect your opinion of the environment now? *Yes, I care about the environment*
14. Explain the habits of your home country or town. *There is not much to be done in Egypt by a single person, on a large scale we would probably be able to accomplish something*
15. Do you consider yourself ecocentric, anthropocentric or technocentric? To make it work properly in this day and age we must combine all three

Quote:

*“Everybody is just obsessed with themselves right now”*

**Subject 2: Louis Falisse**

Country of Origin: Belgium & United States

Hometown: Washington DC & London

Did you study Environmental Science in School? Not necessarily

Environmental Value System: Anthropocentric

1. How many beauty products do you use on a daily basis? *Shampoo, Soap, Deodorant, Toothpaste, Face Scrub*
2. What is your morning routine? *Walk up, Shower, Brush Teeth, Get Dressed*
3. Do you use cars, public transport or do you walk? *Walk*
4. Do you recycle? *When it’s possible*
5. Do you tend to buy items in plastic or styrofoam boxes? *Plastic*
6. Do you eat meat? *Yes*
7. How often do you buy food from the supermarket or do you eat elsewhere? *Supermarket*
8. How often do you shop for food? *Every week or every other week*
9. How often do you buy clothes? *Twice a month*
10. Do you recycle on a daily basis? *I’d like to think so*
11. What do you recycle? *Paper, Plastic & Trash*
12. What are the laws/habits of your country? *A lot of people try to recycle but there are lots of guidelines, they’ll just throw everything away*
13. Do the habits of your home country affect your opinion of the environment now? *The last five years that I lived in the US it became a big thing, therefore, affecting my viewpoint.*
14. Explain the habits of your home country or town. *People began to educate themselves and understand the importance of saving the environment*
15. Do you consider yourself ecocentric, anthropocentric or technocentric? *A bit of all three but mostly anthropocentric. I don’t think technology by itself it can fix the issue*

Quote:

*“I believe if we all work together with technology we can fix the issue”*

**Subject 3: Ian Cohen**

Country of Origin: United States

Hometown: New Jersey

Did you study Environmental Science in School? No, not at all

Environmental Value System: Ecocentrism

1. How many beauty products do you use on a daily basis? *Shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, toothpaste, hair wax, saline, lotion, face scrub, revitalizing cream*
2. What is your morning routine? *Wake up, shower, eat, go to school*
3. Do you use cars, public transport or do you walk? *Walk, Bus or Train*
4. Do you recycle? *No*
5. Do you tend to buy items in plastic or styrofoam boxes? *Whatever is cheaper*
6. Do you eat meat? *Yes*
7. How often do you buy food from the supermarket or do you eat elsewhere? *Supermarket & Shops*
8. How often do you shop for food? *Once a week*
9. How often do you buy clothes? *Once a week*
10. Do you recycle on a daily basis? *No*
11. What do you recycle? -
12. What are the laws/habits of your country? *My hometown does not care about recycling or the environment*
13. Do the habits of your home country affect your opinion of the environment now? *Yes 100%, I have absolutely no childhood upbringing revolved around being eco-friendly or keeping the world clean.*
14. Explain the habits of your home country or town. *It’s almost baffling how much we don’t care but pretend to care. People like to have that image that they do care but you know that they don’t care. Everyone said that they cared and that recycling and the environment was important but they didn’t. No one cared as everybody only cares about themselves and the environment is not ourselves.*
15. Do you consider yourself ecocentric, anthropocentric or technocentric? Ecocentric, we bring destruction and pain to everything we cross. We destroy nature and thus destroy the world. Technology is worthless besides information but everybody abuses technology.

Quote:

*“I should care, it’s an important topic, I just don’t have the patience”*

**Subject 4: Isabelle Demeunynck**

Country of Origin: Belgium

Hometown: Belgium/ Shanghai

Did you study Environmental Science in School? Yes for 1 year

Environmental Value System: Anthropomophism

1. How many beauty products do you use on a daily basis? *10+*
2. What is your morning routine? *Wake up, shower, eat breakfast*
3. Do you use cars, public transport or do you walk? *Walk to school*
4. Do you recycle? *When I can*
5. Do you tend to buy items in plastic or styrofoam boxes? *Plastic*
6. Do you eat meat? *Yes*
7. How often do you buy food from the supermarket or do you eat elsewhere? *Supermarket*
8. How often do you shop for food? *Once a week*
9. How often do you buy clothes? *Once or Twice a month*
10. Do you recycle on a daily basis? *Occasionally*
11. What do you recycle? -
12. What are the laws/habits of your country? *Strict Laws in Belgium, must recycle*
13. Do the habits of your home country affect your opinion of the environment now? *Yes, as there is a good mindset regarding the environment in Belgium*
14. Explain the habits of your home country or town. *There are rules are regulations to recycle in Belgium but in Shanghai you don’t recycle*. *You have to recycle your trash and if you don’t do it they will not take your trash in Belgium*
15. Do you consider yourself ecocentric, anthropocentric or technocentric? *Anthropocentric, as I think people working together and maybe will technology we can solve the problem*

Quote:

*“Anthropocentrism is where we are at right now and we need it to get to technocentrism, and it’s where we are headed”*

**Subject 5: Thivadol Maithai**

Country of Origin: Thailand

Hometown: Bangkok

Did you study Environmental Science in School? No

Environmental Value System:

1. How many beauty products do you use on a daily basis? Shampoo, Body Wash & Toothpaste
2. What is your morning routine? Wake up, shower, walk to school
3. Do you use cars, public transport or do you walk? Walk
4. Do you recycle? *Yes*
5. Do you tend to buy items in plastic or styrofoam boxes? Plastic
6. Do you eat meat? *Yes*
7. How often do you buy food from the supermarket or do you eat elsewhere? *Supermarket once every two weeks and restaurants*
8. How often do you shop for food? *Once every two weeks*
9. How often do you buy clothes? *Once every two months*
10. Do you recycle on a daily basis? *No*
11. What do you recycle? *Cardboard, Plastic & Food*
12. What are the laws/habits of your country? *No evident laws in Thailand regarding recycling*
13. Do the habits of your home country affect your opinion of the environment now? *Yes, but my schooling helped educate me, as I learnt it during prep school in England*
14. Explain the habits of your home country or town. *There is little importance on the environment and recycling but lately there have been more efforts when regarding the environment and recycling, people are starting to work together to fix the issue*
15. Do you consider yourself ecocentric, anthropocentric or technocentric? *Anthropocentric*

Quote:

*“People need to work together and contribute together to solve the issues”*

REFLECTION

Conclusion

To conclude, I partially accept my hypothesis as they all had different environmental value systems with different reasoning behind them due to their cultural upbringing. However, they had similar routines and shopping habits which shows there is an aspect of similarities that overlap among the different cultures, this may be due to similar social standing and standard of living.

Each individual had their own experiences and those who have studied environmental science in the past were more inclined to recycle such as Lucas Salama and Isabelle Demeunynck. However the lack of education and importance of the environment and recycling also had reversal effect as it resulted in less interest in the environment such as Ian Cohen. When regarding the different cultures and their background their involvement and education in their childhood had a direct effect on their environmental value system and those who are more international found it much more difficult to decide on one of the EVSs as it shows an abundance of different viewpoints and cultures such as Teddy Maithai and Isabelle Demeunynck. For those who grew up in America, there was a paradoxical view, this perhaps was due to different geological locations and also different systems of education, comparing the education system in New Jersey in comparison to Washington DC.

By exploring their daily routines and shopping habits it was clear that many were similar and their recycling habits reflected on the comfort and ease of their days, this was shown with Louis Falisse and also Lucas Salama.

To summarize, one’s cultural background has a direct effect on their environmental value system and their daily habits and shopping habits are decided more on their standard of living and location. One’s education and personal upbringing reflects in a symbiotic relationship with their views on the environment, the more stress put upon the importance of saving the environment and recycling through education and households the more inclined they are to think similarly in the future. Those with little exposure to this mindset will have less inclination to become more environmentally friendly and recycle voluntarily.

My study proved and disproved…

Evaluation

To improve this project, I could have used my original plan and extended the study by interviewing people of different age groups and of more different cultures. In addition, I could have also used a wider range of cultures and people of different standards of living. There were some overlaps in cultural upbringings in my study which may have affected the results and the conclusion of my study. I also could have made the video clearer with better audio and I could have perhaps used archival footage with explanations of the different cultures. I should have used a large number of interviews of a wider age range as it would make my results more reliable and accurate.

To revise my project, I would….

To further expand this study, I could incorporate the country averages of waste, energy consumption and overall investment in environmental studies in the education systems in tandem with my interview results. I could further expand this by comparing these studies and interview and categorize them by continents or countries.