

Culture essay samples

[Sociology, Community](#)



The cultural identity of a civilization is the utmost important factor in the comprehension of the nature of the community as it represents “ the totality of ideas” and behaviors which the people who live in that community share. One needs to comprehend what cultural conflict is in the context of learning more about the culture of the communities across the globe. The conflict is a purposeful action on the part of two or more parties who are in a competitive situation. Such situations can even come into existence without the conscious awareness of the conflict among the players. Incompatibility is the primary cause behind the inception of such conflicts. (Week 1) Hence, it is of paramount importance to comprehend the dynamics that lead to such conflicting situations. Indeed, cultural conflict is inevitable when two or more players are in close contact.

The parties in question are an aggregate in the form of a community, crowd or organization which gets involved in the impending conflicting situation. Karl Marx goes on to argue in his writings that the economic forces are omnipotent in determining the society and its ways. He focuses on the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat of the world society. (Week 1) Conflict theory opines that the primary ambition of every society is to try and maximize its benefit in comparison to others.

What is very central to all social relationships is the competition to have control over the resources that are scarce. All the societal structures have structural inequality and the people who benefit the most from such these structures have the most amount of interest in maintaining them. Change comes due to conflict and is often abrupt in nature, rather than being gradual.

One very significant conflict between the genders of the human civilization has been a matter of concern. Patriarchy is a very major factor which drives the world society. The predominance of the male folk on the society on the females is something that is prevalent in every cultural community across the world. The females are taken to be weaker than the males. They get certain gender roles which aim to keep them under the subjugation of the males of the community. (Week 2) The sexual division of labor is one example of the discrimination. Also, the domestic sphere is taken to be a place where the women should keep themselves confined to. The domestic sphere is a subordinate sphere to the world outside which belongs to the men. The time and care which is put into raising a child is more for the women in comparison to the male counterparts.

Kinship and family are major factors which come into play while discussing cultural conflict. Kinship is the relationship which exists between the people who share a genealogy and are related to each other by cultural or biological descent. The concept of kinship comprises of people related by descent, as well as marriage. Kinship is one of the most important and basic principles for comprehending the social groups and the cultural practices. (Week 3)

There are three basic structures of the family. A nuclear family is one which has only the husband, wife and the children. It is the most basic building block. A stem family is one where along with the members of a simple family, the husband's parents live in the same home. An extended family is one in which multiple simple families live together. The nature of family structure is changing all over the world due to several factors and is a major factor in the cultural realm of the society.

Another major conflict is the human-environment conflict which is omniscient across the entire globe in the contemporary times. The study of how individuals utilize their culture to adapt to the environments is cultural ecology. The survivability of the people increases by the cultural and psychological changes which come in the lifetime. The study of the interrelationship between organisms in the environment where people dwell is called ecology. The community of the animate and inanimate objects taken together is called ecosystem. One major challenge in the present day scenario is not to violate the carrying capacity of the environment that is the number of people that it can support with a given technology and culture. (Week 4)

Cross-cultural conflict over the environment is another major issue. The indigenous people are getting targeted by people who come from outside and aim to take over the environment where these natives have been residing for ages. It has been a major concern for anthropologists over the years. (Week 4)

The conflict between the indigenous people of a territory who are the original inhabitants and the ones who have come over to that place from somewhere else is a very major type of conflict that is there in many places across the globe. (Week 5) The original inhabitants seek to have political control over the entire resources and the cultural heritage while the others impede this process. There are about 200 million indigenous people in the entire world on the present day. (Week 5)

Globalization is another major threat to the cultural identity of the respective communities as it aims at homogenization of the culture across the world.

Globalization endeavors to establish the cultural hegemony of the first world on the local cultures. Another trait of globalized culture is the tendency of “disneyfication” of the indigenous people and the dominance of eco-cultural tourism. Likewise, the people of the Western world, for example, visit East Africa to have an experience of seeing the “traditional” natives of Africa and the animals. Chinese eco-cultural tourism is another such example where the natives are showcased to the people who come from outside. The minority culture in Lijiang is one such example which is a thing of exploration for tourists. (Week 5)

Conflict regarding property rights is another important issue. There are four types of rights regarding property: Open access property, Private property, Common property and State property. Open access property rights leave the resources unregulated and free for anyone. In State property rights system, the rights to resources are vested in the state authority. Private property, on the other hand, reserves the rights to resources to an individual or group of people. Common property is something that belongs to an identifiable community of independent users, the Maasai traditional herding system being an example. (Week 6)

Another key concept of cultural conflict is reciprocity. Reciprocity means an informal system of exchange which involves good, labor or money. One needs to think about the factor that ignites the reciprocal behavior among the human beings. There can be three factors which are: self-interest, desire for doing social good, moral obligation. (Week 7)

Another major concept of cultural conflict is social stratification. It is the inequality of the different categories of people of the society which has been

structured over the years and determines the kind of access or rewards these respective sections of the society have for themselves. The societal differentiation of the classes is not just limited to material culture. It influences cultural capital and social capital. A more complex material culture leads to more stratification in the society. The two major factors in the stratification are degree of inequality and mobility. There is a process by which the people are positioned and categorized in the stratification system. It is through the method of legitimation that people or groups who belong to varying categories get legitimized into the positions. The very common examples of societal inequality are racial and economic inequality. (Week 7)

Religion is the driving force among people from different cultures and communities. Religion is the greatest power which is inexplicable and beyond human control according to people. People follow the deities or gods and see religion as the cultural knowledge of the supernatural that helps them to come to terms with the impediments of human life. However, the evolutionary view of the religions across the world is very simplistic. The comprehension of the religions contains ethnocentrism or cultural bias.

(Week 9) The existence of syncretism is totally ignored due to ethnocentrism. This perspective of thought judges another culture by the values of the culture of the person who is making judgment. Such people make judgment based on their own ethnic group or religious belief. This view is extended to language and customs too, which are the unique characteristics of any culture.

Thus, these major issues regarding cultural conflicts make it clear how complicated the scenario can get when it comes to the interaction and

incompatibility of two or more cultures. It is only through the comprehensive study of these concepts that one can get an insight into the conflicts that are of omnipotent importance for the study of cultures and communities across the world. These factors determine the existence and future of a gazillion people and there needs to be proper scholarly research which would lead to a better picture.

Works Cited

Cultures in Conflict, Week 1: Course introduction; Understanding culture; Conflict Theory; Key concepts.

Cultures in Conflict, Week 2: Language and worldview; Gender.

Cultures in Conflict, Week 3: Kinship and family; Reproduction.

Cultures in Conflict, Week 4: Ecology and subsistence; Population dynamics; Environmental conflict.

Cultures in Conflict, Week 5: Indigenous peoples; Cultural and biological diversity; Conservation.

Cultures in Conflict, Week 6: Protected Areas and People; Balancing Human and Environmental Needs.

Cultures in Conflict, Week 7: Race and economic inequality in the United States; Inequality in global perspectives.

Cultures in Conflict, Week 9: Religion, magic and worldview.