

Short answer

[Science](#), [Anthropology](#)



Running Head: Concepts in Anthropology of Module #, Assignment # The definition of culture encompasses the social and cognitive elements surrounding a human being. Culture is interpreted as a collection of “practices and beliefs that are fundamental to the functioning of different societies”, (Throsby, 1999). Culture embodies the attitudes, values and customs a person has either formed or learned over his lifetime (Throsby, 1999.). Since culture passes on from generation to generation, it represents a heritage that has passed on for generations and in the study of anthropology the origin of man is explored, it is very important to study cultural variations in the prevalent pressures of globalization and how the changing dynamics of the world are impacting culture. I have a Chinese friend, whose mother scolds him frequently and he listens quietly, that lies in contrast with the way I am and I feel it is the cultural difference between the two of us that makes him revere elders comparatively more.

Generalized reciprocity refers to giving something such as a gift to someone without expecting a gift in return. Balanced reciprocity on the other hand refers to giving someone a gift while having the expectation of a return gift which may not necessarily be of the same value. While the first two forms of reciprocity have relationship building as a goal, negative reciprocity is largely motivated by self-interest. It refers to exchange of things with the expectation of gaining personally by the exchange (Uhl-Bien & Maslyn, 2003). Since anthropology deals with studying human interactions, studying reciprocity becomes an imperative. When I was a child I used to give my friends gifts on their birthdays with the expectation of getting return gifts on my birthday, which can be an example of balanced reciprocity.

Over the years the family structures have evolved from extended to nuclear families, particularly in the Asian countries. In an extended family system property and income is joint in a family comprising of brothers, sisters, parents who may choose to live together under a roof or separately. In the nuclear family structure a man lives alone with his wife and children with no shared income and property with the rest of his family (Bahadur & Dhawan, 2008). Since the study of anthropology entails studying the changing social and cultural landscape, thus studying the family structures is but a part of anthropology. My Chinese friend told me that in China there exists an extended family system where all members of a family live together which seems so different than how families in America have more nuclear structures.

Kinship is referred to as those relations who can genetically be traced back to a generation, therefore culture holds kinship together as well (Read, 2000). It is in this regard that we see how intertwined the given concepts are. In the study of anthropology, human histories, origins, interactions are studied and the study of kinship is but a part of cultural anthropology which is why we must study it. An example of kinship is how we differentiate between our relations as blood relations and non-blood relations, those who are our blood relations such as cousins form a part of our kinship whereas friends and family friends do not.

Norms are that part of a society which guide behavior. The general understanding of norms amongst individuals in a society dictates social protocol and the expected way in which individuals are expected to behave. Transgression on the other hand refers to the violation of the social norms

which can lead to awkward situations (Fointiat, 2008). Since anthropology is a study of human interactions and culture, we need to study how norms originated in order to understand the premise behind human behavior. An example of norms is that when my Chinese friend came to my home, he was strangely asking my parents for permission to watch TV, which is contrary to what happens at our house since the established norm of the house is that we do not need to seek permission before doing what we want, at least on a trivial matter such as watching TV.

References

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