

Embracing diversity

Sociology



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Embracing diversity By: College: Course: Professor: Date: Anthropology is the scientific study of humans as social organisms and how they interact with each other in a social gathering or community set up. It entails the study of human ancient, current and cultural changes, physical stature, language characteristics and archaeology.

An anthropologist interest lies in comprehending human diversity and way of life in an explicit manner. The four main branches of anthropology which include biological, cultural, archaeology and linguistic clearly elaborate what it entails to be human (Lavenda-2013). Biological anthropology talks of how the evolution of humans is genetically influenced and not enhanced by the surroundings. Cultural anthropology is centered on the study of structural system of individuals sharing a common belief or norm. Linguistic anthropology majorly revolves on the psychology of speech, composure and use in human beings.

Moreover, archaeology constitutes of the systematic study of human remains through excavation, dating the human remains to know the period of existence and analysis. Anthropology is all about the acquaintance of the unfamiliar with proven facts and provides knowledge that deciphers facts from rumors. Cultural anthropology is a very enticing part of anthropology because it does not only enable one to acknowledge cultural diversity but also develop globally conscious individuals. As mentioned earlier, this part of anthropology explicitly looks human cultures, belief, daily activities, values, ideas, means of livelihood and parts of social and cognitive organization (Lavenda-2010).

There are two means by which an anthropologist can study culture due to its abstract nature; empiricist approach, whereby he mainly relies on observation of the human behavior in a particular community set-up and subjective approach in which the researcher understands the structure of ideas and meanings that exist in a member of a certain culture. The primitive perception that I personally had about humanity has been scraped off as a result of the in-depth study of cultural anthropology. Individuals and communities were initially characterized by their social, economical and political factors within their localities. Evolutionism has showed a conceptual change due to the easy interaction of individuals as a result of the modern evolution of technology that has made every corner of the world accessible to any person. The level of interactions between individuals from a similar ecology niche has almost become non-existence due to the replacement with television programs, movies and social electronic devices.

Despite this, the social interaction circle has grown larger as a result of technology which enables an individual interact with more people different from parts of the world over a short period of time. This study has personally helped me get over the notion that Muslims are associated with terrorism. I initially felt fear when I was in an environment filled with Muslims; well, not Muslims alone but any individual wearing a veil. This mostly applied to Muslim women that wear the veils covering up their faces, leaving out the eyes. I can attribute this fear from to the society I grew in; I was used to my Christian community before I came to campus. The laws and beliefs we had were so strict that we feared other dominions, this seclusion was driven into

us by the clergy; to make us believe that people that had different beliefs and practices were potential risks and could harm us at any time.

The primitive notion that was instilled in me always had a bearing to this question; if they are good people, why do they find it relevant to cover their faces that much? The definite answer was that they had something to hide; not only secrets but sinister motives. Religious profiling and the threats that came to our country and get aired on national television also cultivated the fear in me. It would have never reached this point if my parents would not have been reacting to the issue with so much disgust as they used to do.

My elementary and high school environments were more or less the same because all my schooling up to university level were based in the same strictly Christian district. There were some primitive practices we used to do that I now see them to have been very hurting if not shameful to the face of evolution and humanity at large; there was no shaking of hands or exchanging pleasantries with non-Christians, no accepting gifts from them and worst still, avoid all conversations. I can't imagine that I would literally snob them! I must admit that I had a tough time adjusting to the campus environment.

I was always tensed in my first semesters when a non Christian would sit next to me. I remember a particular case when I came to a lecture late and found all seats occupied except one; next to Sikh, I literally missed that 2 hour lecture and had to struggle with my continuous assessment test. It is during that course that I made a turning point and my point was later boosted when I got to learn about anthropology. The struggle I had in my

first continuous assessment test was the same one I had in the second. Ironically, the Sikh boy who I was evading was the same one that noticed my problem and came to help. At first I was adamant but with lack of options I thought; why not give it a try. I must admit that that is the sweetest memory I hold dear and use it to enlighten my rural folk later on. With that act of compassion I learnt that religion does or dress code does not define someone's character.

Study of anthropology has helped know the value that I hold about my culture and the justifications I give to the are the same ones that any other person would give in support to their religion and culture. It also taught me that judging or profiling others because of ethnicity and background is a heinous notion; if everyone was to discriminate then the world would be an unbearable place to stay. All we could be witnessing are endless fights and ultimate wars.

Cultural anthropology thus, aims at enabling the native of a particular culture objectively and rationally understands their own culture to deduce what makes them stand out from the other cultural groups hence upholding the aspect of self acceptance. Besides, it enables one apply the knowledge gained from familiarizing with different cultures to alleviate human challenges and misconceptions rather than causing ethnic conflicts. The collective study of different cultures enables scholars to identify the similarities and unique aspect of various cultures, hence embracing diversity.

References: Robert H Lavenda
Core concept in cultural anthropology
Robert H Lavenda
Anthropology: What does it mean to be human?