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Loubna SNANI * 1

Laboratory of Psychological and Educational Applications, Constantine 2

University 20 August 1955, Skikda, (Algeria)

Email : l.snani@univ-skikda.dz

Djalaleddine BOUATTIT 2

University 20 August 1955, Skikda, (Algeria)

Email : d.bouatit@univ-skikda.dz



Abstract :

This article aims to demonstrate the inherent value of cultural diversity from the perspective of cultural anthropology. Culture is a pervasive force that permeates every aspect of human life; as much as society produces its own culture and value systems, culture in turn produces its own societies and shapes their social structure in its unique and distinctive way. This continuous and dynamic interplay underscores the adaptive nature of human existence. Consequently, individuals engage in a constant, reciprocal, and complex interaction with their surrounding physical environment and the specific cultural context in which they were raised.

Thus, one of the most prominent and direct benefits of cultural diversity is the expansion and enrichment of cultural knowledge across various environments and levels. This enrichment is clearly evident in educational institutions such as schools and universities, workplaces that gather diverse backgrounds, and the broader society. Understanding this diversity goes beyond mere peaceful coexistence. Throughout this article, we will provide a comprehensive overview and an in-depth analysis of the concepts of culture and cultural diversity in light of the principles of cultural anthropology through time.

Keywords: Anthropology - culture - cultural anthropology - cultural diversity - society.

المخلص :

يهدف مقالنا هذا إلى إظهار القيمة المتأصلة للتنوع الثقافي من منظور الأنثروبولوجيا الثقافية. الثقافة قوة شاملة ومتغلغلة في كل جوانب الحياة البشرية؛ فيقدر ما ينتج المجتمع ثقافته الخاصة وأنظمتها القيمية، تقوم الثقافة بدورها بإنتاج مجتمعاتها الخاصة وتشكيل بنيتها الاجتماعية بطريقتها الفريدة والمميزة. هذا التبادل المستمر والديناميكي يؤكد على الطبيعة التكيفية للوجود البشري. حيث ينخرط الأفراد في بيئتهم المادية المحيطة وسياقهم الثقافي المحدد الذي نشأوا فيه. لذا، فإن إحدى أبرز الفوائد المباشرة للتنوع الثقافي تتمثل في توسيع نطاق المعرفة الثقافية وإثرائها في مختلف البيئات والمستويات. سواء كان ذلك على مستوى المؤسسات التعليمية كالمدارس والجامعات أو أماكن العمل التي تجمع خلفيات متنوعة، وصولاً إلى المجتمع الأوسع، حيث من خلال هذا المقال، سنقدم لمحة شاملة وتحليلًا معمقًا لمفهوم الثقافة والتنوع الثقافي في ضوء المبادئ الأنثروبولوجيا الثقافية عبر الزمن.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأنثروبولوجيا - الثقافة - الأنثروبولوجيا الثقافية - التنوع الثقافي - المجتمع.

1. *Introduction*

Anthropology is fundamentally concerned with the comprehensive study of humanity as a social being and as an integral part of society. It examines the individual within the context of systems and patterns that stem from a specific culture, analyzing how humans interact with their immediate environment.

This holistic approach causes anthropology to overlap significantly with multiple fields of knowledge, including biology, the human and social sciences, and the broader domain of culture.

The discipline's importance is evident in its deep examination of the principles governing human development, both physically and culturally, with a specific emphasis on the subfield of cultural anthropology. This specialty seeks to understand various aspects of human social and cultural behavior.

Historically, the development of anthropology has been categorized into distinct eras that reflect the emergence of its foundational concepts. In antiquity, rudimentary anthropological thought was discernible in the works of diligent scholars across various civilizations (Greek, Roman, and Chinese), who documented the aspirations and dreams of peoples during those historical periods.

Furthermore, anthropology thoroughly investigates cultural diversity, which serves as the primary basis for distinguishing one society from another. Understanding this diversity extends beyond mere academic interest to encompass tangible economic benefits, such as enriching the tourism sector. Cultural diversity is recognized as a source of wealth for both the state and society, as the cross-fertilization of ideas fosters innovation and a form of intellectual excellence.

This diversity is also crucial for the human development necessary for general progress and the advancement of humanity. Since culture shapes the individual emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually, cultural diversity actively engages the role of each individual within society. It underscores the existence of a guiding vision that directs interaction between individuals from different backgrounds in a constructive manner. Moreover, this principle helps establish a societal culture founded upon mutual respect, acceptance, and cooperation.

In light of the aforementioned theoretical and applied significance of cultural anthropology, the following research question can be posed: What is the true value of cultural diversity within the context of contemporary anthropological analysis?

2. Cultural Diversity

2.1 The concept of culture

The concept of culture is recognized as one of the most complex in academic discourse. Scholars defining culture have historically applied the term in various ways: some utilize it to describe the specific behaviors of a particular social class, others employ it to express a society's capacity for creation and innovation, and a third group uses it to denote a specific educational or refinement level.

Furthermore, some scholars have treated culture as synonymous with the concept of civilization. The word itself is derived etymologically from agriculture "cultivation of the land". Ibn Khaldun, in his famous "Muqaddimah", presented culture in terms of umran -urbanization or civilization- positing that human society is a necessity, a concept encapsulated by the maxim: "Human beings are civilized by nature" (Khawani, 2021).

Culture serves as the central object of study for a range of distinct research disciplines:

- **Anthropology:** generally investigates how membership in a specific social group relates to particular sets of behavior.
- **Ethnography:** seeks to explore and describe how the speech systems and behaviors of groups relate to social structures and beliefs, partly through structured exposure to other cultures.
- **Cultural Studies:** aims to understand and interpret the methods by which members of a group represent themselves through cultural products such as dances, graffiti, or sporting events (Sekkal, 2024, p. 211).

Malik Ben Nabi's emphasis on "ideas" in his theory of culture stems from the specific needs of the Arab context, suggesting that a theory of ideas alone is sufficient if a change in those ideas can alter the trajectory of a society and its development.

The diverse forms of ideas constitute an important part of the tools of development in any given society. The prevailing "opinions" within a society subject to the movement of ideas are, in effect, a mutable form of development that requires continuous intellectual advancement, which ultimately results in the renaissance of the nation and subsequent development in other spheres of life (Bakouch, 2016).

2.2 The Concept of Cultural Diversity

The very presence of human beings on Earth necessitates leaving a historical and cultural imprint, which fosters a sense of belonging to a specific society while differentiating it from others. This has led to the emergence of separate societies, each possessing a unique set of characteristics, values, customs, and traditions that define their identity. This process has created global

cultural diversity, a phenomenon actively supported and promoted by organizations such as UNESCO (Bakir, 2020).

Culture can be broadly defined as that complex whole which includes knowledge, doctrine, art, morals, law, customs, and all other values and habits acquired by an individual as a member of society.

It encompasses all shared customs, values, and beliefs that characterize a particular social group and are transmitted across generations. Therefore, culture is a shared way for a group to think, feel, act, and communicate, which fundamentally shapes its existence. At its deepest level, culture represents the essence of life values arising from a holistic worldview.

The inherent wisdom in the diversity of cultures between peoples lies in the exchange of these cultures. The concept of "cultural diversity" refers to the human character characterized by variety and difference. Each society seeks to preserve its unique identity amidst global interdependence and the forces of globalization (Sadouki, 2018).

Cultural diversity also implies the multiplicity of forms of identity expression, where specific characteristics make each group distinct from others in values and customs. It relates more to collective rather than individual choices, representing the idea of coexistence between multiple cultural manifestations within the same societal environment (Bouhbila, 2019).

In summary, cultural diversity is a variation in the behavioral patterns of groups that distinguishes them from others. It is intrinsically linked to the concepts of coexistence and unity, requiring each society to be accepting of the culture and characteristics of the other. The term refers to the variety of different cultures, contrasting with cultural homogeneity, and emphasizes respect for these differences within a specific region or the world as a whole.

2.3 Causes of cultural diversity

According to Elshaker (2021), the primary reasons for the existence of cultural diversity are multifaceted:

- **Ideology of National Movements:** The intellectual structure and ideology underpinning national movements significantly influence the emergence and shape of cultural diversity.
- **Civilizational Differences:** The variety of civilizations across different historical epochs and their inherent differences lead directly to a diversity in the cultures emanating from them.
- **Modern Technology:** The influence of modern technology plays a substantial role in shaping societal attitudes toward culture and its defining determinants.

2.4 Barriers to Cultural Diversity

Cultural diversity often encounters a number of significant challenges and obstacles that can be difficult to manage:

- **Management Difficulties:** Managers and administrators face challenges in establishing universally applicable standards and norms when leading teams from diverse backgrounds and cultural environments.
- **Language Barriers:** Differences in language impede effective communication between individuals.
- **Inequitable Attention:** Majority groups may sometimes receive unfair attention at the expense of minority groups, whether within the context of a single country or an organization.
- **Disunity and Bias:** A lack of trust and respect stemming from internal bias and disintegration among members of diverse groups can hinder cohesion.
- **Conflict Escalation:** Differing opinions and perspectives on specific issues can escalate into counterproductive conflicts.
- Common barriers therefore include language differences, management difficulties in diverse settings, and bias among group members (Alsamdi, 2021).

2.5 Manifestations of Cultural Diversity

Recent years have witnessed substantial development in communication technologies, resulting in extensive exchange and mixing between different cultures—precisely what is known as cultural diversity. This diversity manifests in several forms:

- **Language:**
Language is defined as a harmonious set of symbols, signs, and sounds. It serves as the incubator of knowledge and the primary means of communication used daily by people to exchange information, ideas, and express emotions. Nations and civilizations have always been distinguished by their unique languages, which are a fundamental pillar of any culture and a key manifestation of difference between peoples. Languages are the gateway to understanding and integrating different nations and civilizations across the globe.
- **Religion:**
Religion is one of the most influential factors shaping human cultures. It refers to a set of beliefs held by a group that affects their worldview concerning life, the universe, the afterlife, and deity. The influence of religion is found in nearly every detail of diverse cultures, significantly enhancing the differences between nations. Learning about the world's many religions is a way to facilitate cross-cultural fertilization, understand different civilizations, and, crucially, learn about the various factors

of civilizational difference and alternative viewpoints on topics that have occupied humanity since time immemorial (Maousoui, 2021).

- **Traditions:**

Traditions constitute the material and immaterial components of a society, governed by security, legal, economic, social, and religious criteria. These human components are features that define the existence of what is termed "society." They express a pattern of behavior operating within a framework dedicated to preserving the society's culture and ensuring the continuity of its identity.

3. Cultural Diversity in The Light of Cultural Anthropology

Anthropology is less a single field of research than a nexus of multiple disciplines. It functions as a bridge between history and culture, simultaneously operating as both a theoretical and an applied science. Its core objective is the study of human beings and their development within specific environmental contexts.

By examining human culture, values, attitudes, behaviors, and social interactions, anthropology provides a framework for understanding humanity's present condition and predicting future trajectories. The central pursuit of anthropology is to decipher the complex puzzle of humanity—identifying both the universals and the variations that exist across different cultures and time periods.

Anthropologists create a holistic picture by studying the intersection of our biological and cultural evolution. They delve into diverse questions, such as why some societies practice animal husbandry while others rely on hunting for sustenance, or why physical characteristics differ across populations with some being typically tall and slender while others are shorter and more robust. The entirety of human existence, from physical traits to complex belief systems, ignites anthropological curiosity (Mazari, 2024, p. 3).

The discipline encompasses everything related to humanity, covering internal aspects, such as psychological and physical composition, and external aspects like lifestyle and relationship with society's culture. Given that culture is synthetic, cultural anthropology specifically aims to understand the nature of culture itself.

It systematically studies cultural change, borrowing, blending, conflict, and interaction between societies. Furthermore, it examines the characteristics of similar cultural patterns—those that emerge independently in different places and eras.

Fundamentally, cultural anthropology is concerned with the human being as a member of a society defined by a specific culture, with its inherent values,

customs, religious systems, and language. It investigates human lifestyles and behaviors that stem directly from this cultural matrix. It is important to note that the variations in anthropological schools of thought regarding specializations, branches, fields, and research methods are understandable given the differences in history, culture, philosophical currents, and the perceived function and purpose of the science itself. This divergence was not limited to first-world countries but was replicated when post-colonial nations, such as those in Africa, engaged in anthropological research (Hussein, 1987).

Culture arises from human social life through the endeavor to devise ways to cope with environmental conditions and thus control surrounding circumstances. Human beings acquire culture from birth through interaction; it is not transmitted genetically but is formed through socialization, diffusion, acculturation, borrowing, imitation, or assimilation. While culture does not include innate behavior or reflex actions, humans did create some cultural systems to satisfy innate needs, such as methods for collecting food, hunting, or farming.

These are acquired through learning, can be developed as learning techniques evolve, and, thanks to language, are transferred symbolically from one generation to the next. Social systems differ in their comprehensiveness. Patterns that encompass all aspects of a single society are known as generalities of social control systems, the violation of which results in penalties or social ostracism.

Not all cultural patterns enjoy this level of comprehensiveness, particularly in modern societies. Societies are characterized by constant change; change is the universal law to which all phenomena are subject. In modern industrialized societies, the pace of change is faster due to intense social interaction and cultural friction.

A culture may disappear if the society carrying it disintegrates through extinction, invasion, or integration with a larger culture, leading to the emergence of a new amalgamated culture (Khawani, 2021).

Cultural diversity is one of the key concepts in cultural anthropology, where scientists seek to understand the differences inherent in human culture. This role is of great importance today, as multiculturalism is a global phenomenon requiring a nuanced and unique understanding.

The concept of cultural diversity refers to the multiple differences in values, beliefs, customs, traditions, languages, arts, music, cooking, clothing, and other aspects of various civilizations across the world.

It promotes dialogue and interaction between people of all nationalities and cultures, leading to respect for differences and coexistence. Social diversity fosters creativity and innovation in all fields affecting society, including economics, technological innovation, and entertainment.

Diverse contributions help preserve humanity's heritage and cultural development by studying the traditions and ways of life unique to each culture.

The interest in cultural diversity is universal, encompassing all global cultures with their advantages and disadvantages, and it holds a central position within the field of anthropology. Culture cannot be discussed without acknowledging diversity (Nesli Bakir, 2020). Cultural diversity is generally conceptualized in opposition to monoculture—a closed system resistant to exchange, which is contrary to human nature. Culture exists only within the framework of an overlap of cultures. When utilized effectively, this diversity yields significant benefits for both the individual and society, imposed by the laws of life based on the exchange of benefits, knowledge circulation, and human nature (Boukerdoun, 2023).

Cultural diversity is the result of differing human and geographical characteristics from one place to another; culture takes various forms across space and time and is increasing daily. This calls for the exploration of leveraging diversity for economic development, integrating a "cultural footprint" into all economic activities—a practice referred to as the "purple economy" (Tibi & Ayad, 2020).

According to Saad Elshaker (2021), key reasons for cultural diversity include language, a primary driver often defining political boundaries; ideology, the intellectual structure of national movements; historical civilizations, where differences across historical epochs lead to diverse cultural outputs; and modern technology, which impacts societal attitudes toward culture. Cultural diversity manifests itself in several forms, facilitated by modern communication technologies: language, the fundamental incubator of knowledge; religion, a highly influential factor shaping worldviews (Maousoui, 2021); and traditions, material and immaterial components of society that operate within criteria to preserve a society's culture and ensure identity continuity.

Cultural diversity faces a number of obstacles, including management difficulties in diverse environments, language barriers, potential unfair attention toward majority groups, disunity or bias among members, and conflicts arising from differing opinions (Alsamdi, 2021). When an individual interacts and communicates with people from different cultures and backgrounds, it provides opportunities to deal with the unfamiliar, which enhances self-confidence in navigating situations outside of one's comfort zone, thus building a stronger personality.

4. Conclusion

Cultural diversity plays a pivotal role in activating the cultural forces within society, leveraging them to construct a pluralistic social fabric that respects all identities and backgrounds. This diversity is not merely a social characteristic; it is a genuine source of national wealth. The resulting cross-fertilization of ideas fosters a unique kind of innovation and distinction.

Cultural diversity manifests in the acknowledgment of the multiplicity of cultures, ideas, and human experiences, alongside the recognition of specific, deeply rooted human experiences unique to individuals and groups raised within particular cultural environments.

Consequently, cultural diversity relates to the collective characteristics of all members of society, transcending the differing individual experiences of its members. This contributes to the emotional, cultural, and spiritual development of the individual. Furthermore, diversity helps clarify the role of each member of society, strengthens the creation of constructive ideas, and establishes a societal culture based on the principles of mutual respect and acceptance of others.

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