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Comparison between how Weber and Geertz Define Culture

Culture is a broad topic that many scholars try to research and analyze. It concerns the behavior of people in society. Culture can be defined as people's way of living in the community comprising of norms, rules, activities, and beliefs.

WEBER'S CONCEPT OF CULTURE

Weber was a sociologist who was famous for his great work in developing social behaviors in relation to believers and cultural backgrounds. Weber wrote books that define human activities in relation to religion and the ways of worship. He explained that people believed to be Protestants are the ones who contributed to the emergence of capitalism in the society. The Protestants ethics theory argues that many people who followed the protestant religion believed that God gave them a duty to create wealth and enjoy their success.

Protestant work ethics urged people to stop being lazy and work hard to gather wealth and other revenues in order to remain empowered. Many believers of this faith opened and started business and enterprises, and everyone was looking forward to accumulating money for himself/herself. The idea of Weber was that the

protestant religion was a significant contribution to people developing capitalism ideology than other faiths. His comments on the cultural or social activities of protestant community were clear evidence that any society with many Protestants believers was prone to adopting capitalism as a way of living. Capitalism is a situation where people in a particular society concentrate on creating more wealth and money, so that they continue to flourish as individuals. In capitalistic society, people work hard to control factors of productions and business opportunities for their own gains.

Weber notes that, unlike the other religions, Protestants are hard-working and always determined to acquire economic gain at all times. His study reveals that there is a connection between the capitalism and Protestantism. Capitalism was persistent and well developed in countries where the Protestants were believed to dominate. Capitalistic culture encourages and calls for individual hard work for a person to excel. In a society where the capitalism culture is in existence, people compete and work for long hours to gain more from their businesses and enterprises.

Max Weber in his book titled *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* examines the relationship of Protestants' values and the rise of the capitalistic culture. He views religious practices as a great connection between the desires and the ability to work. Weber pointed out that there was a clear relationship and contribution of religious ethics or values to the formation and arising of capitalism. The ideology of many Protestants like Calvinist movement was that people should work hard to fulfill the promise of God to his people. Although Weber believed that the religion was a reason for the rise of capitalism culture, he points out that there might be the other reasons contributing to the formation of capitalism units. The

strength of this theory was the argument that was supported by the fact that in any capitalist economy, state or culture, there was a bigger impact of protestant religion.

WEBER'S CRITICISM AND LIMITATIONS

There is criticism that comes from Weber himself as a writer and a sociologist. He once claimed that his book about protestant ethics or values and the rise of capitalism was only made up of five chapters. Therefore, it is evident that this theory was not fully researched to make a person conclude that there was a direct correlation between the Protestant religion and capitalism culture. Another criticism or limitation was that this explanation or theory of the capitalism culture creation was only one of the factors that contribute to the rise and formation of capitalism. Robertson is a scholar and sociologist also argued that capitalism was first developed in Italy and it was due to the difference in literacy levels. Other scholars also support the arguments of Robertson, since capitalism was realized in the 14th century in Italy as opposed to Weber's theoretical argument that it was developed in Britain.

GEERTZ'S THEORETICAL APPROACH

Geertz was among many scholars and writers in the past years and he is recognized for his contribution in interpreting cultures. He was an anthropologist who outlined culture in thick description concepts. He defined culture as a system of understanding thoughts that people express in different manner through symbols to show their power and knowledge. Culture is comprised of many conceptions that are used to communicate to the other people how a person views life. Geertz made similar comments like Weber that a human being is like a wild animal suspended in a spider's web and that he has to adjust and live with it. Culture is comprised of many symbols that explain

the complexion of a man. The web contains many lines or formations that make it appear beautiful from the outer look. However, the construction of the web is made by hard work combined of different social features. These features are the factors or power that form the human cultural and social system and help to define the inner meaning of life.

From the notes of the deep plays of cockfight, the writer expresses the fighting cocks as representatives of a man in the society. The play shows two cocks fighting until the policemen come for their rescue and separate them. The fight is a symbol of men in the community who exalt themselves because of the power and status in the society. The play further explains how men engage in a high class fight that a normal or local person cannot stand to make a trial. The deep play of cock fighting was a cultural or social event that everyone wished to participate in Bali. Cock fighting was a good example given by Geertz as one of the symbolic aspects of life in the society.

The cock fighting game was a game that many people viewed as gambling and illegal in Bali. Cock fighting was associated with wealth, economic status, class, and power. The game was classified into two categories of wealthy men and poor or low income earners stakes. There was a bet for each game, and class distinguished a commoner and a rich man by the amount of money put as a bet. This symbolic game portrays the difference in life aspects and features that defines and develops different groups in society or community. The cockfight games become an important insight or approach in the society compared to the people of Bali. The lifestyle and cultural symbols like that of cock fight helps to show the deep ideology, organization, perception, and reality of the society. Through the symbolic activities, people can express their complexion or features, rivalry,

the economic gap and the way people raise themselves because of wealth, and control of economic factors.

The symbols of the society help people living in it to describe and explain their culture in a better way than explaining. The people of Bali achieved to talk to themselves and about their culture through symbolic realm and life engagements. The thick description explains the perception and concept of an anthropologist who believes that culture is comprised of many life aspects that are explained better by the society members in a symbolic manner.

GEERTZ'S CRITICISM AND LIMITATION

Geertz concentrated on dualism and symbols that are external or outside and can be seen by a rational person. However, he did not show the relation or connection of the internal evidence or acknowledgement and external symbolism. Geertz also concentrated on showing the gap or space between culture reality and social system in society. He ignored facts required to support the connection of cultural and social system and the life reality of people in the society.