

UNIT TWO: Human Culture and Ties that Connect

2.1. Conceptualizing Culture: What Culture is and What Culture isn't ?

Definition of Culture

- ▶ Anthropologists and sociologists define culture in different ways.
- ▶ Culture includes **all things beyond nature and biology**: Norms, belief, knowledge, morals etc
- ▶ It is **a system of learned behavior** shared by and transmitted among the members of the group.
- ▶ It is a **collective heritage** learned by individuals and passed from one generation to another.

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2.2 Characteristic Features of Culture

1. Culture Is Learned:

- ▶ Culture is **not transmitted genetically** rather; it is acquired through the process of learning or interacting with one's environment.
- ▶ The process of acquiring culture after we born is called **enculturation**.

2. Culture Is Shared:

- ▶ For a thing, idea, or behavior pattern to qualify as being “cultural” it must have a shared meaning **by at least two people within a society**.

3. Culture Is Symbolic:

- ▶ A symbol is something **verbal or nonverbal**, within a particular language or culture that comes to stand for something else.

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4. Culture Is All-Encompassing :

- ▶ Culture comprises countless **material and non-material aspects** of human lives.
- ▶ Culture is the sum total of human creation: intellectual, technical, artistic, physical, and moral

5. Culture Is Integrated:

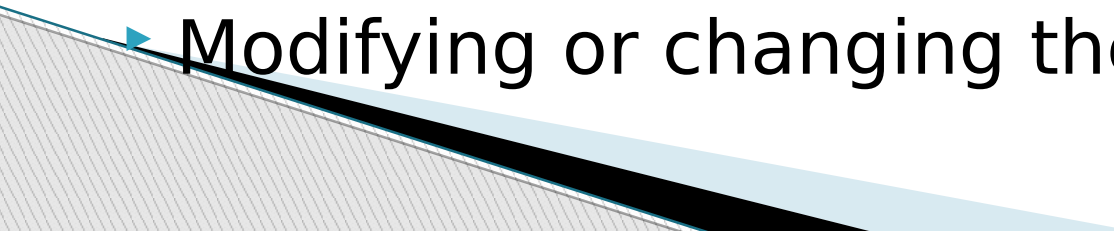
- ▶ culture should be thought as of integrated wholes, **the parts of which**, to some degree, **are interconnected with one another.**
- ▶ A culture **is a system**, change in one aspect will likely generate changes in other aspects

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6. *Culture Can be Adaptive and Maladaptive:*

- ▶ People adapt themselves to the environment using culture.
- ▶ Many cultural patterns such as **over consumption and pollution** appear to be maladaptive in the long run.

7. *Culture Is Dynamic:*

- ▶ Culture is changing constantly as new ideas and new techniques are added as time passes
 - ▶ Modifying or changing the old ways.
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2.3 Aspects/Elements of Culture

- Culture is **reflected through the various components** that it comprises, viz., **values, language, myths, customs, rituals and laws.**
- Two of the most basic aspects of culture are material and nonmaterial culture.
- **2.3.1 Material culture**
- It consist of man-made objects such as tools, implements, **furniture, automobiles, buildings, dams, roads, bridges** etc
- It is the physical substance which has been changed and used by man: **Technical & material**
- Technical (relating to operating machine in industry)

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2.3.2 Non - Material culture

- It is something **internal** and intrinsically valuable, reflects **the inward nature of man**.
- It also includes our customs, belief, value, norms feeling, thinking etc.

Values:

- Values are **the standards** by which member of a society define **what is good or bad, beautiful or ugly**.

Beliefs

- Beliefs are cultural conventions that concern **true or false assumptions**

Norms

- Norms are **shared rules or guidelines** that define how people “ought” to behave under certain circumstances.

a. Folk way-not strictly enforced(eg.leaving a seat for elders)

b. Mores -believed to be essential to core values and we insist on conformity (A person who steals, rapes, and kills)

2.4 Cultural Unity and Variations: Universality, Generality and Particularity of Culture

In studying human diversity in time and space, anthropologists distinguish among the universal, the generalized, and the particular.

- **Universal:** Certain biological, psychological, social, and cultural features (found in every culture).
- **General:** common to several but not all human groups),
- **Particular:** unique to certain cultural traditions.

2.5. Evaluating Cultural Differences:
Ethnocentrism, Cultural Relativism and Human Rights

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The concepts of ethnocentrism and cultural relativism occupy key position in anthropology.

A. ETHNOCENTRISM:

- It refers to the tendency to **see their own culture as the only right way of living** and to judge others by those standards.
- It results in prejudices(rejection) about people from other cultures....**judge saying Culture 'X' and 'others(alien)...**

B. CULTURAL RELATIVISM:

- To **examine their behavior as insiders**, seeing it within the framework of their values, beliefs and motives.
- It describes **an attitude of respect** for cultural differences **rather than condemning** other people's culture as **uncivilized or backward**.

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C. Human rights:

- ▶ Many anthropologists are uncomfortable with the strong form of cultural relativism that suggests that **all patterns of culture are equally valid.**
- *What if the people practice slavery, violence against women, torture, or genocide?*
- Human rights: **rights based on justice and morality** beyond and superior to particular countries, cultures, and religions.

2.6 Culture Change

Culture change can occur as a result of the following Mechanisms:

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- **Diffusion** :The process by which **cultural elements are borrowed** from another society
- **Acculturation** :Is the exchange of cultural features that results when groups have continuous firsthand contact (Eg.trade, colonization)
- **Invention**: the process by which humans innovate, creatively **finding solutions to problems.**
- **Globalization**: working to **promote change in a world** in which nations and people are increasingly **interlinked and mutually dependent.**

2.7 Ties That Connect: Marriage, Family and Kinship

2.7.1 MARRIAGE:

Is a **change in status** for a man and a woman and the **acceptance by society** of the new family that is formed.

2.7.1.1 Rules of Marriage

- Societies also have rules that state whom one can and cannot marry.
- The most universal form of **incest taboo** involves mating between members of the immediate (nuclear) family: **which is prohibited**

2.7.1.2 Mate Selection: Whom Should You Marry?

- a) **Exogamy:** This is the rule by which a man is allowed to marry someone **from other social group**.

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c) Preferential Cousin Marriage:

- ▶ **Cross cousin:** b/n sibling of the opposite sex
- ▶ **Parallel cousin:** b/n sibling of the same sex

d) The Levirate and Sororate

- ▶ **Levirate:** to marry the brother of dead husband
- ▶ **Sororate:** to marry the sister of dead wife.

2.7.1.3. NUMBER OF SPOUSES

- ▶ Societies have rules regulating whom one may/may not marry; they have rules specifying **how many mates** a person

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- ▶ **Monogamy:** *the marriage of **one man to one woman at a time.***
- ▶ **Polygamy** i.e. marriage of a man or woman with two or more mates. Polygamy can be of two types:
 - *Polygyny: the marriage of a man to two or more women at a time.*
 - *Polyandry: the marriage of a woman to two or more men at a time*
- ▶ **2.7.1.4 Economic Consideration of Marriage**
- ▶ Transactions, which may **take place either before or after the marriage.**
- ▶ **1.Bride Price(bridewealth):** is the compensation given upon marriage **by the family of the groom** to the family of the bride.

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2. Bride Service: When the groom **works for his wife's family.**

3. Dowry: A dowry involves **a transfer of goods or money in the opposite direction**, from the bride's family to the groom's family.

2.7.1.5 Post-Marital Residence

- ▶ **Where** the newly married couple **lives after the marriage** ritual is governed by cultural rules.
- ▶ **Patrilocal Residence:** the married couple lives with or near the relatives of the husband's father.
- ▶ ☐ **Matrilocal Residence:** the married couple lives with or near the relatives of the wife.
- ▶ ☐ **Avunculocal Residence:** The married couple lives with or near the husband's mother's brother.

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- ▶ **Ambilocal/Bilocal Residence:** The married couple has a choice of living with **relatives** of the wife or relatives of the husband
- ▶ **Neolocal Residence:** The Married couple forms an **independent place** of residence away from the relatives of either spouse.

2.7.2 FAMILY

- ▶ Family is **the basis of human society**. It is the most important primary group in society. The family, **as an institution, is universal**.
- ▶ There are different types of family structure- **the nuclear family** and **the extended**

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2.7.2.1 Functions Marriage and Family

- ▶ **1. Biological Function:** The institution of marriage and family serves biological (**sexual and reproductive**) function.
- ▶ **2. Economic Function:** Marriage brings economic co-operation between men and women and **ensure survival of individuals** in a society.
- ▶ **3. Social function:** the institution of marriage brings with it the **creation and perpetuation of the family**

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2.7.3 KINSHIP

- **Kinship** is the method of reckoning (regard or count) relationship. In any society every adult individual belongs to two different nuclear families.
- The family in which he was born and reared is called **'family of orientation'**. The other family to which he establishes relation **through marriage** is called **'family of procreation'**. T
- The relationship based on blood ties is called **"consanguineous(born) kinship"**
- The kind of bond, which arises out of **a socially or legally defined marital relationship**, is called **a final relationship (kin)**

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2.7.4 DESCENT

- ▶ **Descent** refers to the social **recognition of the biological relationship** that exists between the individuals.
- ▶ The **rule of descent** refers to *a set of principles by which an individual traces his descent.*
- ▶ In almost all societies **kinship connections** are very significant.
- ▶ **Succession** and **inheritance** is related to this rule of descent. The three important rules of descent are as follows;

1. **Patrilineal Descent**

- ▶ When descent is traced solely through the male line

2. **Matrilineal Descent**

- ▶ When the descent is traced solely through the female line.

3. **Cognatic Descent**

- ▶ In some society's individuals are free to show their genealogical links **either through men or women.**

Unit Three: Human Diversity, Culture Areas and Contact in Ethiopia

- ▶ **3.1. Human Beings & Being Human: What it is to be human?**
- ▶ In order to address this questions, we should rely on key anthropological concepts of **comparative approach (cultural relativism)** and **evolution**.
- ▶ **The cultural relativism** *encourages us not to make moral judgments about different kinds of humanity*: it examines cultures on their own and from the perspective of their unique history and origin.
- ▶ **By studying evolution** ,*anthropologists tend to treat humanity as one of the biological species in the animal kingdom.*
- ▶ So **human being is a Bio-cultural**

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Eg. The increment of the brain size of man (**Biological**)

changes in terms of increased intelligence and language (**Cultural**)

▶ **Humanity(modern man, *Homo sapiens*)** stands for the human species, a group of life forms with the following **characteristics**:

- *Bipedalism (walking on two legs);*
- *Relatively **small teeth** for primates of our size;*
- *Relatively **large brains** for primates of our size;*
- *Using **modern language** to communicate ideas;*
and
- *Using complex sets of ideas called **culture** to survive.*

3.2 Origin of the Modern Human Species: *Homo sapiens*

- ▶ **3.2.1.1 Cosmologies and Human Origins**
- ▶ **Cosmologies** are *conceptual frameworks that present the universe (the cosmos) as an orderly system.*
- ▶ Cosmologies account for *the ways in which supernatural beings or forces formed human beings and the planet we live on.*
- ▶ **Western tradition(myth):** a Greek philosopher *argued that life originated in the sea and that humans initially were fishlike, eventually moving onto dry land and evolving in to mammals.*

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3.2.1.2. Evolutionary and paleo-anthropological perspectives on human origin.

-As opposed to cosmological explanation, anthropologist rely on **scientific views of evolution** in order to explain human origins.

-Simply put, evolution **refers to a process and gradual change in specie over time.**

-Evolution is used to describe the **cumulative effects of three independent facts(features).**

- ▶ ☐ **Replication:** The fact that life forms have offspring;
- ▶ ☐ **Variation:** The fact that each offspring is slightly different from its parents, and its siblings; and
- ▶ ☐ **Selection:** The fact that not all offspring survive, and those that do tend to be the ones best suited to their environment.

3.3 The Kinds of Humanity: human physical variation

- ▶ **People come in many colors and shapes**
- ▶ The answer comes from the study of human biology by physical anthropologists.
- ▶ **3.3.1. Racial types- anthropological perspectives**
- ▶ Obviously, not all human beings look the same: **having different colors, body shapes, and so on** into different categories sometimes is called races.
- ▶ Biologically speaking, a **race** is *a group of organisms of the same species that share similar physical (and genetic) attributes and specific geographic regions.*
- ▶ **Adaptation** is a process *(behavioral and/or biological) that increases the likelihood of survival*

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3.3.2. What Anthropologists can say for sure about Human Races?

- ▶ So do human races(species) exist? Very strictly speaking, **yes**. *Homo sapiens sapiens*
- ▶ ***Other than the geographic differences, genetic differences don't mean a lot, biologically.***
- ▶ It is inaccurate to say “**the female species**” when talking about significant sex differences between males and females.
- ▶ it is also inaccurate to say “**the African race**” or the “**European race**” when speaking of deep differences in these peoples.
- ▶ For most physical anthropologists race(but biological issue) is nearly meaningless when applied to humanity

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- ▶ *“Human racial classification is of no social value and is positively destructive of social and human relations.”*
- ▶ **3.4 why is every one different? Human cultural diversity/variation**
- ▶ *Although all humans are of the same species, they don't all act the same; human behavior varies tremendously worldwide*
- ▶ If race doesn't control a person's characteristics, what does account for human behavioral variation? In short, the answer is culture.
- ▶ **Cultures differ because people live in different conditions**, be they ecological, economic, social, political etc
- ▶ Generally, the sources of Human variation is emanated from environmental. evolutionary and Cultural factors.

3.5. Culture area and cultural contact in Ethiopia

- ▶ In the context of Ethiopia, we may come up with different culture area in relation to **subsistence**.

A. Plough culture area

- ▶ Plough culture area represents those parts of the country where agriculture is predominantly the means by which subsistence is eked out.

B. Enset culture area

- ▶ *covers a vast region in the southern part of country.*

C. Pastoral culture area

- ▶ Pastoral culture area is found in the low land areas covering a large section of the Afar in the northwest, Somali in the southeast and Borena of southern of Ethiopia.